

**CHINUA ACHEBE AND RUY DUARTE DE CARVALHO: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *THINGS FALL APART* AND *VOU
LÁ VISITAR PASTORES***

GREGÓRIO DE JESUS TCHIKOLA

**DOCTORATE THESIS IN LANGUAGES, LITERATURES AND CULTURES, SPECIALIZATION
IN LITERARY STUDIES**

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This Thesis is presented for the fulfilment of the necessary requirements to obtain the Doctorate Degree in Languages, Literatures and Cultures, Specialization in Literary Studies under the Academic Supervision of Professor Ana Maria Mão de Ferro Martinho Carver Gale.

DECLARAÇÕES

Declaro que esta tese é o resultado da minha investigação pessoal e independente. O seu conteúdo é original e todas as fontes consultadas estão devidamente mencionadas no texto, nas notas e na bibliografia.

O candidato,

Lisboa, de de

Declaro que esta tese se encontra em condições de ser apreciada pelo júri a designar.

O(A) orientador(a),

Lisboa, de de

Do not ignore the talk of the wise...,
From them you will learn how to think,
And the art of the timely answer (Ecclesiasticus 8, 8-12)

Abstract

CHINUA ACHEBE AND RUY DUARTE DE CARVALHO: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *THINGS FALL APART* AND *VOU LÁ VISITAR PASTORES*

The comparative study of African literatures in Portuguese and in English languages has not been the object of many research projects in Africa.

My work is centred in this field of study and it aims at conducting a comparative analysis of the narratives produced by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe and Angolan author Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, observing the convergent and divergent aspects in aesthetics and ideology present in their works. The *corpus* under analysis includes *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho.

The authors converge ideologically in their works as they pay attention to issues such as land ownership and usage, peoples' heritage and history. Besides the historical and cultural diversity, these texts also allow the discussion of other issues, notably particularities in aesthetic elaboration. Both novelists combine literary and anthropological topics. Thus, this thesis is a correlational, descriptive and analytical type of research, and is seeking cultural meaning and understanding through fiction.

The main sources for my thesis were the two texts mentioned above, but also documents available on African literature, history, literary criticism, ethnography, politics and anthropology.

Key words: Literature, Angola, Nigeria, Kuvale, Igbo, Ethnography and Representation.

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I would also like to acknowledge the FCSH (The New University of Lisbon) for the significant institutional and academic support I received. Without it, this dissertation would simply be impossible under my conditions of foreign student and working in Angola. I have been the beneficiary of the best instruction a young scholar could hope to receive.

In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Ana Maria Martinho, Professor Nuno Júdice, Professor Teresa Almeida, Professor Rui Zink, Professor Carlos Ceia, Professor Maria do Rosário Pimentel, Professor Gustavo Rubim who were my mentors in the Doctorate studies at FCSH (New University of Lisbon) and have given of their time and intellect.

Professor Ana Maria Martinho's wisdom and supervision, patient mentorship and intellectual capacity have been a constant blessing throughout my studies. The excellence of her scholarship is unparalleled and I am tremendously grateful to have been her student. Early conversations with Professor Nuno Júdice and Professor Rui Zink were also fundamental in setting me on the right track at the outset of my research. At the New University of Lisbon, the library's collegiality and generosity helped me to turn that advice into the work that now forms the core of this dissertation. Throughout my studies, Professor Rui Zink has been a fountain of wisdom. As it has for so many other scholars, Professor Zink's work has taught me how to read literature and scientific methodology and his scholarship represents a standard of excellence worth aspiring to.

Without the support and intellectual challenges of Professor Arsénio Cruz, my skills and my career would be much diminished. I am tremendously thankful to count on him as a counsellor and a very close friend.

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I am also thankful that its completion will afford me more time to spend with my brothers Horácio, Mingo, Dadi, and Didi, and my sisters Yana, Fifi and Bia.

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One of the great pains of academic work is the way its persistent focus can keep us distant from those we love most. My wife Genoveva, my daughters Agnes and Isis, and my son Cristiano were very patient with me every time I had to travel to Lisbon for studies or research during those four years. This dissertation is also theirs. I love them all and I ask them for pardon for often being away from home for studies. I know they understand, and hope they have already forgiven me for that.

During the war of 1993 in Huambo, Angola, my family lost our beloved sister Gizela, who was only seven years old. Everybody loved her so much. Her death touched us all. We still miss her terribly.

This dissertation is dedicated to her memory.

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Chapter I: General Introduction

This thesis has its inception in the identification and discussion of crucial problems within African countries such as cultural heritage (tradition) and modernity, especially among the Igbo (Nigerian) and Kuvale (Angolan).

The reading of the forms the authors Chinua Achebe and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho use to expand on this reality is a condition *sine qua non* to define our central premises. The strong descriptive emphasis and the complex network of cultural meanings found both in *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* further support the relevance of a comparative approach.

I will search for the complex meanings in the narratives that better frame their proposed topics, and explore hypotheses about the constitution of Nigerian and Angolan identities. Both authors under analysis question the limits of objectivity, the limits of impartiality in the collection of data about their nations and the limitations of scientific methodology in fieldwork. On their part, they combine and propose anthropology and literature as potential analytical tools.

Achebe and Carvalho also use uncommon linguistic tools not only to season their style, but also to make it more consequent to the tasks they have set up as far as cultural discussion and portrayal are concerned. I observe that the themes chosen by the authors impact the structure of their texts and are supported by discourses and languages that go beyond the conventional documental perspective. As I see it, these texts highlight the realities characterized by linguistic plurality of the communities they address.

From my readings of these books, I perceive the potential of taking further the theoretical discussion between literature and anthropology, and between ethnography and fiction, which, in my opinion, can help restore African ethnography in general, and in particular that of Nigeria and of Angola.

Departing from this point, my work further focuses on a comparative analysis of the above mentioned narratives, observing notably the convergent and divergent aspects in aesthetic and ideological terms that they offer. I also look at the social and cultural representations of the people (Igbo and Kuvale), as described by the authors.

I present hereby the research design of the thesis which focuses on a leading question and on its sub-questions, and which have served as a guideline for the writing of the thesis itself. The objectives of the thesis, the hypotheses raised and the results to be expected are outlined as well.

To situate my research topic historically and theoretically, a literature review on issues concerning literary criticism, ethnography, fiction, social construction and representation, African literature in general, and Nigerian and Angolan literary works in particular, will be conducted in chapter II. In chapters III and IV, I will focus on Chinua Achebe and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho respectively, by making reference to biographical notes, the position they occupy nationally in their respective literary canons. Historical and literary synopses of the books under analysis will also be presented.

Chapter V will deal with the comparative approach to both cultures and peoples (Kuvale and Igbo), by paying attention to their linguistic and cultural identities, social constructions and representations. It will also unveil cultural encodings such as Yam and Cow and review post-colonial imperialism, discourse and cultural hegemony as an attempt to understand pre and post-independence textualities especially in Africa.

Chapter VI will compare the texts under analysis from theoretical, ideological and aesthetical perspectives, by assessing readership and theoretical implications of both books in African literature and the national canons at stake and by, fundamentally, observing the ethnographic and literary convergences and divergences of both texts. These two chapters, V and VI, will constitute the core of the thesis.

Chapter VII will be my general conclusion where I will summarize and indicate the crucial findings of this research and make recommendations for future investigations in the same field.

Finally, chapter VIII will present the bibliography, followed by a glossary and annexes.

Thus, this methodological framework is designed from a grounded theoretical perspective,¹ which has provided a body of texts for the research and planning of the thesis. A variety of differentiated epistemologies, what I would call substantive theories – that is, theories generated within particular fields of research or disciplines – has also been used to evaluate and understand

¹ See Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*, London: Sage Publications, 2006.

possible theories that these two texts, i.e., *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, generate, in order to establish comparative grounds and provide potential theoretical dissemination.

I characterize both Achebe's and Duarte's texts as fictional ethnographies and also as ethically, politically and socially relevant documents, therefore theoretically justifiable for academic work. I want to stress the importance of revisiting and understanding these two texts under a broad set of scientific and analytical perspectives.

Such an approach will allow me to understand the objective and subjective realities expressed and suggested in the texts. As an example, I can mention the issue of the westernization of African reality, implicitly found in Achebe's *Things fall Apart*. The author shows how this has changed the human and physical configurations of the African continent and how this has urged the study of the African world in transition and in the move.

Contemporary ethnography, also referred to by some as a form of anthropology, views qualitative writings as socially constructed texts and, therefore, it tries to deconstruct hidden imperatives in the use of authority, voice and style as some researchers have appropriately pointed out.

This observation stresses the role the new anthropology must play to reconcile the boundaries between the social sciences and humanities in order to critically examine literature and ethnography as form of socially engaged *textualities*. Following this perspective, I want to assign unequivocal relevance to African texts that in the past were often seen by some social theorists as theoretically insignificant.

For this reason, this thesis is a correlational, descriptive and analytical type of research, seeking meaning and understanding through fiction. It draws on literary criticism from classical to contemporary theorists by studying and interpreting these literatures. The method to be followed will include a review of documents and comparative text analysis of *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*.

Starting this research, I turned initially for guidance to van Maanen's hermeneutic-phenomenology, which is essentially a research and writing methodology for investigation, and to Paul Ricoeur's. This was crucial for me, because phenomenological understanding as such is existential; it relates to impressions of how phenomena are experienced. Hermeneutics is the

interpretation of textualities resulting from a specific situation (or experience), where texts can be spoken or written, and can include gestures and actions. As Ricoeur put it,

Une manière radicale de mettre en question le primat de la subjectivité est de prendre pour axe herméneutique la théorie du texte. Dans la mesure à l'intention subjective de son auteur, la question essentielle n'est pas de retrouver, derrière le texte, l'intention perdue, mais de déployer, devant le texte, le « monde » qu'il ouvre et découvre. Autrement dit, la tâche herméneutique est de discerner la chose du text (Gadamer) et non la psychologie de l'auteur. La chose du texte est à sa structure ce que, dans la proposition, la référence est au sense (Frege)²

Ricoeur claims here that hermeneutics is a radical method used to meditate upon the text *per se* in order to find a meaningful theory that can explain it as well as define the worlds or experiences described in it. It appears to me that, for Ricoeur, hermeneutics is a theory for discovering new meanings through the interpretation of texts. As I see it, it can also be applied to the interpretation of literary forms and cultural phenomena described in *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* since both of them report experiences of self and other in multiple contexts.

Overall, this is a process through which my understanding of theory and method will evolve as I apply them. Thus, the research questions which narrow down my methodological framework are presented as follows.

This thesis is focused on finding out the convergent and divergent aspects in aesthetic and ideological terms in Achebe's and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's texts.

It is also fed by eight other sub questions which will help narrow this research. Thus, it discusses: the extent to which these texts are important in the Nigerian and Angolan canons; the theoretical frameworks that justify a critical study of these two texts; the way Igbo and Kuvale peoples represent themselves and inspire the construction of reality in *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá visitar pastores*; the way their myths help build their linguistic and cultural identities; the extent to which colonization succeeded in hindering these representations; the reason why Yam and Cows are central to the Igbo and Kuvale self and world-representations; if the self-representations and experiences of the Igbo and Kuvale can be epistemologically compared and universalized and in this

² Paul Ricoeur, *Du Texte à L'action: Essais d'herméneutique II*, Paris : Édition Du Seuil, 1986, p. 52.

way inspire contemporary social models; and, finally, the contributions this study can add to the present state of the art of contemporary African literature, culture, language and identity.

Aligned with the main research question and with its sub questions I have set up the following objectives for the study. My general objective will be to elaborate on the divergent and convergent aspects in aesthetical and ideological terms between Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*.

Accordingly, my specific objectives will firstly be to review the theories which support advanced conceptualization within the ethnographic and literary fields; secondly, to discuss the importance of studying these two texts for African literature and ethnography in general and for Nigerian and Angolan canons in particular; thirdly, to determine in which way Igbo and Kuvale people represent themselves and represent external reality; fourthly, to analyze in which way Igbo and Kuvale peoples are portrayed in *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*; fifthly, to answer the question as to what extent colonization has contributed to the misrepresentation of their cultures; sixthly, to discuss the role myths play in building and shaping their linguistic and cultural identities; seventhly, to explain the reason why 'Yam' and 'Cows' are central to the identity of an Igbo person or a Kuvale person, respectively, and how they support the construction of a social ethos; eighthly, to prove that their own representations and experiences can epistemologically be compared and subject to universal reading; and finally, to add scientific and theoretical contributions to core issues concerning contemporary African literature.

Consequently, these objectives allow me to draw the following hypotheses:

H1: I claim that there are common and distinctive features in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's *Vou lá visitar Pastores*.

H2: I claim that *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá visitar Pastores* are fictional ethnographies that can be included in their localized canons as well as globalized for developing inter-ethnic understanding through fiction.

H3: I believe that both Igbo and Kuvale people represent themselves as special and self-sufficient nations yet they acknowledge and respect exogenous and cultural differences and constructions.

H4: I claim that Cows are absolutely central to being a Kuvale and maintaining social cohesion and can inspire contemporary economic models. For the Igbo, conversely, Yam is considered the king of crops and everything else depends on it. *No yam no life*.

H5: I claim that myths play an important role in defining these peoples' social ethos, and should be considered in discursive complexity and not just as mere attempts to explain the origin of life and the world; they are the sole explanation of all things.

In addition, I will discuss disciplinary borders; society as objective or subjective reality; reality, social construction, and literature; what makes literature happen; what is its impact; how does reading get done; how does literary theory relate to criticism; why we should doubt the truth in interpretation (hermeneutics of suspicion). I believe contemporary fiction from Africa can provide valuable information to further this debate.

By considering these questions, I strongly defend that the present consideration of African literature must have a broad and an inclusive focus. The less known authors and critics should be given their rightful part in this.

Chapter II: Ethnography and Literature

2. 1. Introduction

This chapter readdresses the old issues concerning the theoretical relationship existing between ethnography and literature. It reviews key concepts in these fields (literary theory, literature and literary criticism, ethnography and fiction, social construction and representation theories), the major African literatures and ethnographic works.

Through the years I have not been alone in thinking about the relationship of anthropology, ethnography and literature. In fact, many critics have commented constructively on this relationship.³ The re-examination of ethnographic texts has brought up complex questions about science and art, projection and distortion, truth and fiction. Many voices in this conversation have addressed the purposes and weaknesses of the writers of ethnography and anthropology, their class, gender and cultural biases, their status as outsiders, and their ways of structuring their texts.⁴

Some contributors to this dialogue have explored the use of the ethnographic novel for conveying anthropological information.⁵ Others have suggested ways to bring fictional strategies or the fictional material of a studied culture into the ethnographic text.⁶ Still others seem to have blurred the distinctions altogether. Dan Rose, for example, has envisioned “the dissolution of boundaries between literature, sociology, anthropology, critical theory, philosophy, cinematography, computer science and so on”⁷ and called for “a polyphonic, heteroglossic, multigenere construction”⁸ to replace the old ethnography and anthropology. In effect, they all addressed the ways in which the language of social science fuses with that of the literary imagination.

³ This relation was namely discussed in the works of Sir James Frazer and Ruth Benedict, *Between Anthropology and Literature Interdisciplinary Discourse*; John Leavitt's *Poetry and Prophecy: The Anthropology of Inspiration* (1997); Nathan Tarn's *Views from the Weaving Mountain* (1991); also in some edited works like *Anthropology and Literature* (1993), edited by Paul Benson; *Literature and Anthropology* (1989), edited by Philip Dennis and Wendell Aycock; *Literary Anthropology* (1988), edited by Fernando Poyatos; *Victor Turner and the Construction of Cultural Criticism: Between Literature and Anthropology* (1990), by cultural critic Kathleen A. Ashley.

⁴ See Benson, 1993; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Marcus and Fischer, 1986.

⁵ See E. Fernea, “The Case of *Sitt Marie Rose*: An Ethnographic Novel from the Middle East” in P. Dennis and W. Ayocks (Eds), *Literature and Anthropology* Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech Press, 1989.

⁶ See Dennis and Ayocks, 1989; Van Maanen, 1993.

⁷ Dan Rose. “Ethnography as a Form of Life: The Written Word and the Work of the World.” In P. Benson, (Ed.), *Anthropology and Literature* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993, p. 220.

⁸ Ibid, p. 218.

In an insightful passage comparing the novelist with the ethnographer and the ethnographic novel with ethnography, Fernea writes,

The ethnographic novel had some advantages over the standard ethnography. The novelist need not shun conflict, anger, hatred, or passion, and may often become a participant in the drama of the novel in a way denied the ethnographer, who has in the past been at pains to observe carefully and not to become too involved. Such involvement, existentially or textually, has been seen to mar the scholarly value of the work and violate the code of objectivity by which the ethnographer/researcher has been expected to abide. It is the relative freedom of the novelist that makes this form so fresh a source of insight into the cultures of others.⁹

Fernea seems to support the position which sees the novelist as a new ethnographer, someone who is free to get existentially and textually involved in the reality he or she describes. Such an involvement was denied to the old ethnographer, because it was believed to violate the code of objectivity by which he/she has been expected to abide. The new ethnography, however, called also the ethnographic novel, is believed to be a source of insight into the cultures of others. Therefore, the new ethnographic novelist should be free and fearless to participate in the drama of the novel he writes. This position of the novelist does not mutilate any scholarly value of his/her work. For example, this attitude is observed in Carvalho's *Vou lá visitar Pastores*, in which the author is existentially or textually involved in the reality he describes, as we will observe later, and he is not concerned about breaking any scientific code whatsoever.

In addition, James Clifford and Georges E. Marcus's works, especially *Writing Culture*, are also important for this fusion between the language of social science with that of the literary imagination. James Clifford and Georges E. Marcus's *Writing Culture* addressed the problems created by the representation of culture through writing and offered valuable historical, literary, anthropological, political and philosophical sources for the understanding of the concepts of ethnography and literature.

⁹ E. Fernea, "The Case of *Sitt Marie Rose*: An Ethnographic Novel from the Middle East" in P. Dennis and W. Ayocks (Eds), *Literature and Anthropology* Lubbock, Texas: Texas Tech Press, 1989, p. 154.

Writing Culture raises relevant questions about ethnography itself. It emphasizes the fact that the rhetorical performances of ethnographies are determined by the need to tell an effective story. In reality, the telling of an effective story characterizes the work of an ethnographer.

Ethnography is placed at the centre of a new intersection of social history, interpretative anthropology, travel writing, discourse theory, and textual criticism by various essayists in *Writing Culture*. Recent experimental trends are assessed and the functions of orality, ethnicity, and power in ethnographic composition explored.¹⁰

The core argument it tries to put forward is the fact that ethnography today is considered to be in the midst of a political and epistemological crisis where, for example, western writers can no longer portray non-western peoples with unchallenged authority and the process of cultural representation is now thought to be unavoidably contingent, historical, and contestable. Fundamentally, postmodern writers in humanities and social sciences are also challenged 'to rethink the poetics and politics of cultural invention'.¹¹

One could say that what for many western writers has become some kind of political and epistemological crisis, as claimed, for non-western writers it is probably a liberation from western cultural hegemony and an opportunity to reclaim authentic cultural representations, and certainly an opportunity to deconstruct colonial ethnographies written as a way to justify superiority of those who travelled towards those encountered and conquered.¹²

Not less important is Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Cultures*, a collection of essays on culture, wherein culture is defended as a symbolic system. Clifford Geertz challenges Taylor's famous concept of culture ("most complex whole") and proposes a new one, since Taylor's definition has reached the point where it obscures more than it reveals.¹³ Geertz presents a semiotic concept of culture, which, in line with Max Weber, emphasizes that human beings are animals suspended in webs of significance they themselves have spun. He takes culture as those webs, and the analysis of

¹⁰ See James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds.), *Writing Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, London: University of California Press, 1986, pp. 1 – 25.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 2.

¹² Ibid, pp. 165 – 168.

¹³ See Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books edition, 2000, p. 4.

it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning.¹⁴

Geertz is trying to explain how culture functions and must function whilst construing social expressions on its surface. Particularly important are chapters one, on “thick description”, four and eight on religion and ideology as cultural system and the last chapter, “Deep play: notes on the Balinese cock fight”. In these chapters, Geertz developed an important new concept of culture, the ‘semiotic concept of culture,’ showing that the study of culture remains as central to modern thought about observation, experience and storytelling as it was thirty years ago. For Clifford Geertz, therefore, ethnography is ‘thick description’. Doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing text, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary and, above all, it is interpreting and understanding culture from within.

Certainly, for him, it is not only those things, techniques and received procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the fact of being a kind of intellectual effort, an elaborate venture called “thick description”, a notion borrowed from Gilbert Ryle. As he understands it, ethnography is a collection of multiple and complex conceptual structures which at once are strange, irregular and inexplicit, and which an ethnographer must contrive, grasp and try to explain.¹⁵

Thus, Geertz thinks that “doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of construct a reading of) a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of clippies, commentaries, but written not in conventionalized grasps of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour”.¹⁶ In this sense, I think that ‘thick description’ is literature and can be fictionally constructed or deconstructed where understanding culture is crucial.¹⁷

I agree with the fact that culture is that web of signs and meanings humans have spun to perpetuate their existence. But, it is thick, entangled and complex. That is the reason why I think that, in the process of disentangling the signs and meaning humans have spun, language and myths are

¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 4 – 5.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 5.

¹⁷ Ryle’s discussion of “Thick description” appeared in two recent essays of his (now reprinted in the second volume of his Collected Papers), addressed to the general question of what, as he puts it ‘Le Penseur is doing: Thinking and Reflecting and The Thinking of Thoughts.’

not less important since they mediate, freeze and free meaning and understanding. This reflection links me to Ernest Cassirer's *Language and Myth*.

Ernest Cassirer's *Language and Myth* explored the place of language and myth in the pattern of human culture, the nature of magic and the relationship of culture and religion. This text helped us understand how humans construct their social and cultural webs of signs and meanings. I think that every single web constructed is a work of intelligence, art and genes. It is complex and requires social involvement.

Effectively, Cassirer's ideas have theoretical implications for ethnography and literature since they describe the place which language and myth must occupy in patterning human cultures as well as in understanding social constructions and representations, two concepts to be discussed later in this chapter as well.

Furthermore, paraphrasing Max Muller's philosophical analysis on myth and language, Ernest Cassirer argues that "a myth is conditioned by the agency of language, therefore, the product of a basic shortcoming, and an inherent weakness of language."¹⁸ What does this mean? It means that

Myth, art, language and science appear as symbols; not in the sense of mere figures which refer to some given reality by means of suggestion and allegorical renderings, but in the sense of forces, each of which produces and posits a world of its own. In these realms the spirit exhibits itself in that inwardly determined dialectic by virtue of which alone there is any reality, any organized and definite being at all. Thus the special symbolic forms are not imitations, but organs of reality, since it is solely by their agency that anything real becomes an object for intellectual apprehension, and as such is made visible to us.¹⁹

A cultural symbol speaks, represents and signifies. Therefore, it reflects a context. Apart from being contextual, it is, above all, fruit of human intellectual effort. Human beings compose, freeze or free meanings through symbols socially accepted. That is why, for Cassirer, "myth, art, language and science appear as symbols, not in the sense of mere figures which refer to some given reality by

¹⁸ Ernest Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1953, p. 3-4.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

means of suggestion and allegorical renderings, but in the sense of forces each of which produces and posits a world of its own".²⁰ In this sense, a culture is not but a human symbol.

Historically speaking, most theories of culture exerted great influence on the way different cultures were perceived and categorized by those who used racial superiority arguments to shadow people of different skin colour. Authors such as Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said, Benedict Anderson and many others wrote about some of these racial conflicts and of its implications as far as cultural concepts and relations are concerned, strongly experienced and diffused in the colonial period.

From this perspective, Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* and many other works can help understand cultural relations from colonial and postcolonial angles. This specific work has revealed some abuses of power and authority perpetrated by all those who earlier believed that they were the centre of all civilizations. Homi K. Bhabha claims that

An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism is a paradoxical mode of representation; it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype which is its major discursive strategy" is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated . . . as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual license of the African that needs no roof, can never really, in discourse, be proved.²¹

What does it mean? For Homi Bhabha, it means that "the objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction."²²

In fact, there was an abuse of power within the colonial discourse which represented the colonized as a socially subjugated reality. It employed a system of representation which is found clearly developed in Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Said defended the thesis according to which the Oriental was an idea invented by the West to dominate it; it was a result of a cultural hegemony in relation to whom and what was oriental. As he puts it,

²⁰ Ibid, p. 8.

²¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The location of Culture*, London/New York: Routledge, 1994, p.66.

²² Ibid, p. 70.

L'orientalisme n'est jamais bien loin de ce que Denis Hay a appelé l'idée de l'Europe, notion collective qui nous définit, « nous » Européens, en face de tous « ceux-là » qui sont non européens; on peut bien soutenir que le trait essentiel de la culture européenne est précisément ce qui l'a rendue hégémonique en Europe et hors d'Europe: l'idée d'une identité européenne supérieure à tous les peuples et à toutes les cultures qui ne sont pas européens. De plus, il y a l'hégémonie des idées européennes sur l'Orient, qui répètent elles-mêmes la supériorité européenne par rapport à l'arriération orientale, l'emportant en général sur la possibilité pour un penseur plus indépendant, ou plus sceptique, d'avoir une autre opinion.²³

Thus, as I see it, the issues raised in Achebe's and Carvalho's texts are not only concerned with languages, myths, old cultural symbols or encodings but above all with constructing identity and new symbols in postmodern times and deconstructing colonial discourse based on racial and geographical origin, 'in order to justify conquest and establish systems of administration and instruction'²⁴ as claimed by Homi Bhabha.

These texts answer back to the colonial discourse in order to create a space for Africans to be able to tell their own stories and demystify those which denigrated them; a space for self-determination and identity. Specifically, ethnography and literature are used as tools for repositioning them or themselves in time and space as shown in my thesis.

Subsequently, the foundation of this ethnographic, literary, anthropological and philosophical discussion I am constructing is equally informed by literary theory, often believed to be the same thing as literary criticism. Since my research also addresses issues concerned with the influence of colonialism in literature, especially regarding the historical conflict resulting from the exploitation of less developed countries and indigenous peoples by western nations, my perspective is grounded on post-colonialist critique, developed by theorists such as Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Declan Kiberdas.

²³ Edward Said, *l'orientalisme: l'orient créé par l'occident*. Paris : Édition du Seuil, 2003, p. 19 (Translated by the American Catherine Malamoud; preface of the author (2003) translated by Sylvestre Meininger; preface of French edition of Tzvetan Todorov; postface of the author translated by Claude Wauthier; Original Title *Orientalism*, 1978, 1995, 2003, Penguins Books).

²⁴ Homi Bhabha, *The location of Culture*, London/New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 70.

This certainly means that I am listening to what postmodernism said about criticism in the twentieth century. Theorists like Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Maurice Blanchot are particularly important in this dialogue.

Notwithstanding that, the fact that psychoanalysis (psychoanalytic literary criticism) has won some momentum in literary studies today, it should not be ignored since it explores the role of consciousness and the unconscious in literature including that of the author, reader, and characters in the text. So, authors such as Mario Klarer, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Harold Bloom, Slavoj Žižek, Viktor Tausk were generally visited to clarify the role of the author, reader and characters in the text. To what extent do they influence each other is also relevant.

The reader-response criticism has also been used to focus upon the active response of the reader to a text. Louise Rosenblatt, Wolfgang Iser, Norman Holland, Hans-Robert Jauss, Stuart Hall are important to reader-response criticism. Nevertheless, to examine the universal underlying structures in a text, the linguistic unit in a text and how the author conveys meaning through any structures, I have appealed to structuralism and semiotics theories or simply semiotic literary criticism. Authors such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, Jurij Lotman, Antti Aarne, Jacques Ehrmann and Northrop Frye, Bertrand Russell, to name just a few, are renowned theorists in this area. Bringing them into this thesis is also important for the understanding of Achebe's and Carvalho's work.

2. 2. General Theoretical Review about Key Concepts

The following subchapters will help us to elaborate on the other key concepts needed to further this discussion.

2. 2. 1. Literary Theory, Literature and Literary Criticism

Literary theory teaches us how to read a text. In this context, literary theory resembles philosophy, because it asks fundamental questions, and also, at times, it supports conceptual systems. Literary theory has a certain ambition to interpret the totality of what can be thought; it involves a permanent scepticism interwoven with a variety of questions about the foundations of knowledge and thought.

Despite that, not all theory that we come across with is sceptical about the foundations of knowledge and thought. Some of the theories are positive in their views. All in all, one will happily or

unhappily, come to terms with the fact that much of what one reads is undermined by this persisting scepticism.²⁵

I could ask what literature is then. This is probably the most fascinating question literary theory would ask. Another one would be how can we identify when we see it. Literature is probably most of the times understood as fiction; it may be many things but it simply cannot be trapped within such a definition alone. I expect that the answer to the following questions will help justify my claim.

Primarily, where does literature originate? What are the effects of literature? What is an author?²⁶ My premise is that literature is caused by language, by human psyche, by social, economic and historical forces. Effectively, literature is generated by social circumstances, which means it will happen everywhere there are people and at any time.²⁷

Literature is commonly seen as a body of writing produced by people using the same language.²⁸ The term has its origin in the Latin word *littera* (*litterae*, letters).²⁹ In the past, “literature tended to be considered separately in terms of kinds of writings, or genres as they came to be called in the 18th century when the term literature took on its modern meaning.”³⁰ This derivation of the term literature seems to imply essentially writing. However, there is much of oral literature implicitly present in it as well.

Literature represents various things for different people. In fact, some think that “literature as a whole and its parts mean varying things to various writers, critics, and historians. At one extreme, it may be believed that anything written is literature. Though this position is seldom held. At the other extreme – literature is only the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and *Hamlet* – which is slightly and more properly held.”³¹

²⁵ See Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A very short Introduction*, Oxford: University Press, 1997, pp. 1 – 16.

²⁶ These are equally important questions asked by literary theory. So, one could say that literary theory is very much involved with matters of that kind.

²⁷ The discussion of the classification(s) of and around African Literature has been instrumental in the revision of a theoretical approach to localized artistic realities.

²⁸ See, “The Art of Literature” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume XXIII, Macropaedia Knowledge in Depth*, USA: Pan American and Universal Copyright Conventions, 1993, p. 77.

²⁹ See Vitor Manuel de Aguiar e Silva, *Teoria da Literatura*, 4 Edição, Coimbra: Livraria Almedina, Volume I, 1982, pp. 1 – 13.

³⁰ “The Art of Literature” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume XXIII, Macropaedia Knowledge in Depth*, USA: Pan American and Universal Copyright Conventions, 1993, p. 77.

³¹ Ibid, p. 77.

One could say that “among these extremes, attitudes vary widely. For some critics, a hierarchy exists: tragedy is superior to comedy; the short story is inferior to the novel. For other critics, qualitative criteria apply: poetry is verse that succeeds while the limerick and nonsense verse are failed poetry.”³²

Additionally, it is important to say that “critics also differ on the purpose or ends of literature. Many ancient critics – and some modern ones – hold that the true ends of literature are to instruct and delight. Others – a majority of the modern ones, probably – hold that pleasure is the sole end.”³³ However, I agree with the first opinion according to which “the ends of literature are to instruct and delight.” For me, the ideological purpose of literature would be to instruct and the aesthetical one would be certainly to delight.

Seen from this angle, *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá visitar Pastores* were written both to entertain and instruct readers as they appeal to relevant, fictional or real stories. These stories are meant to become powerful instructive forces which can construct a cultural identity or deconstruct the colonial discourses that preached submission and caused alienation among those encountered and conquered.

Since we all agree that “literature is a form of human expression,”³⁴ then we should also agree that it can be identified either in written or oral forms. Unfortunately, this claim has split apart many literary critics. For some, literature is only what is written. For others, both written and oral forms can be reckoned as literary. Yet, it should be mentioned that some think that “not everything expressed whether in written or oral words, even when organized in complex textualities, is counted as literature. Those writings that are primarily informative – technical, scholarly, journalistic – would be excluded from the rank of literature by most, though not all, critics.”³⁵

In fact, “certain forms of writing, however, are universally regarded as belonging to literature as an art... They include individual attempts which possess something called artistic merit, although the nature of artistic merit might be less easy to define than to recognize.”³⁶ Although forms of

³² Ibid, p. 77.

³³ Ibid, p. 77.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 78.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 78.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 78.

writing, like those mentioned in the previous paragraph, were not universally accepted as belonging to literature as an art, since they lacked literary language, however, it is probably high time we should re-examine this claim. There are journalistic and technical texts which could be considered as ethnographic and literary by definition, because of the form and the approach they take. These texts open way to further this discussion in a very productive way. Many journalistic works can be seen as fictional, elegiac, epic, dramatic, narrative, expository and artistic.

Despite that, some would still agree that “the purest (or, at least, the most intense) literary form is the lyric poem, and after it comes elegiac, epic, dramatic, narrative, and expository verse.”³⁷ Consequently, “most theories of literary criticism base themselves on the analysis of poetry, because the artistic problems of literature are there presented in their simplest and purest form.”³⁸ According to what has just been said, many novels – certainly all the world’s great novels – can be considered as literature while thousands are not so considered, because they do not contain the form and the content of what is essentially artistic.³⁹ Jonathan Culler puts it in an interesting arrangement.

Literariness is often said to lie above all in the organization of language that makes literature distinguishable from language used for other purposes. Literature is language that ‘foregrounds’ language itself: makes it strange, thrusts it at you – ‘Look! I’m language! – so you can’t forget that you are dealing with language shaped in odd ways. In particular, poetry organizes the sound plane of language so as to make it something to reckon with.’⁴⁰

Jonathan Culler emphasizes herein that the use of rhythmical repetition of sounds, the unusual combinations of words which attracts one’s attention to the linguistic structures found in a text, the rhymes (a conventional mark of literariness) and the odd syntaxes it carries are particular signs to look for in order to frame if a piece of writing is or not seen as literature.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 78.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 78

³⁹ Ibid, p. 78.

⁴⁰ Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A very short Introduction*, Oxford: University Press, 1997, p. 27.

But, I would agree instead with authors like Larry Diamond,⁴¹ Marroe Berger⁴² or Vitor Manuel de Aguiar e Silva, just to name a few, who see literature as something bigger than what is assumed by conservative scholars. Diamond, Berger and Aguiar e Silva show how the imagined world of the storyteller can inform us about the real world of experience or of imagination. Under this claim, the novel reveals a wealth of insight into sociological, historical, psychological and political phenomena. Accordingly, Vitor Manuel de Aguiar e Silva argues that

A literatura é fortemente polissémica; o conceito de literatura é relativamente moderno e constituiu-se, após mais de dois milénios de produção literária, em função de um determinado circunstancialismo histórico-cultural; a literatura não consiste apenas numa herança, num conjunto cerrado estático de textos inscrito no passado, mas apresenta-se antes como um ininterrupto processo histórico de produção de novos textos – processo este que implica necessariamente a existência de específicos mecanismos semióticos não alienáveis da esfera da historicidade e que se objectiva num conjunto aberto de textos, os quais não só podem representar, no momento histórico do seu aparecimento, uma novidade e uma ruptura imprevisíveis em relação aos textos já conhecidos, mas podem ainda provocar modificações profundas nos textos até então produzidos, na medida em que propiciam, ou determinam, novas leituras desses mesmos textos.⁴³

Aguiar e Silva sees literature as something profoundly polyssemic, multigenre, polyphonic, modern but not static or ephemeral. In fact, it continually reshapes, changes and reinvents itself either because of the direct influence of its creators, of its readers or of its historical and cultural contexts. New texts are regularly composed, though only a few get canonized. Unfortunately, the texts which get consecrated are mostly those which are thought to conform to the western traditional conventions of the novel or poetry. Yet, most of literary texts do speak to different cultures. Fruit of the encounter of texts with various cultures, new readings and interpretations are usually done, bringing about new meanings and, eventually, the innovation of their form and content.

⁴¹ Larry Diamond, "Fiction as Political Thought: Anthills of the Savannah by Chinua Achebe" in *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 352 (Jul., 1989), p. 435.

⁴² See Marroe Berger, *Real and Imagined Worlds: the Novel and social social Science*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977, pp. 46 – 214.

⁴³ Vitor Manuel de Aguiar e Silva, *Teoria da Literatura*, 4 Edição, Coimbra: Livraria Almedina, Volume I, 1982, p. 14.

But the conservative hardly ever see it that way. Later in this chapter, Diamond will give us more insights into how literature is socially constructed and influenced.

Similarly, literary theory asks other important questions: what is a reader? How does reading get done? How do we form the conclusion that we are interpreting something? What is the reading experience like? How do we put ourselves in contact with the text? But, these questions are equally asked in the hermeneutic studies, a hermeneutics of suspicion:⁴⁴ an issue concerned with interpretation of a text or of some particular kind of literature, as we will refer later in this text.

These questions raised above constitute what most literary critics would call “theoretical approaches to literature.”⁴⁵ These can be classified into five readings and approaches: text-oriented, author-oriented, reader-oriented, context-oriented and the literary critique or evaluation. This classification means that “literary interpretation always reflects a particular institutional, cultural and historical background; it means that various trends in textual studies are represented either by consecutive schools or parallel ones, which at times compete with each other.”⁴⁶

Effectively, according to Mario Klarer, the text-oriented approach “places the main emphasis on the internal textual aspects of a literary work. It means that extra-textual factors concerning the author (his or her biography, other works), audience (race, class, gender, age, education) or larger contexts (historical, social, or political conditions) are deliberately excluded from the analysis.”⁴⁷ “It centres on the text *per se*, primarily investigating its formal or structural features. So traditional philology, the formalist-structuralist schools, including Russian formalism, the Prague school of structuralism, new criticism, semiotics, and deconstruction attempt to trace general patterns in texts or illuminate the nature of literariness.”⁴⁸

The author-oriented approach is a form of biographical criticism. It means that it links the literary text directly to the biography of the author. Dates, facts, and events in the author’s life are contrasted with literary elements of his or her works. The aim is to find aspects connecting the biography of the author with the text.⁴⁹ Mario Klarer says that this approach

⁴⁴ See Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A very short Introduction*, Oxford: University Press, 1997, pp. 57 – 65. See also Christopher Norris’s *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*. London/New York: Methuen & Co., 1986.

⁴⁵ See Mario Klarer, *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 75 – 100.

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 75 – 76.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 78.

⁴⁸ See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Antropologia Estrutural*. Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1967.

⁴⁹ See Mario Klarer, *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 90.

Tends to use psychological explanations, which led to psychological literary criticism, a movement which sometimes deals with the author, but primarily attempts to illuminate general psychological aspects in a text that do not necessarily relate to the author exclusively. For instance, characters in a text can be analysed psychologically, as if they were real people.⁵⁰

The reader-oriented approach, on the other hand, also called reader-response theory, “assumes that there are as many texts as readers.”⁵¹ Still according to Mario Klarer, “this attitude implies that a new individual ‘text’ evolves with every individual reading process.”⁵² These approaches “assume that a text creates certain expectations in the reader in every phase of reading. These expectations are then either fulfilled or left unfulfilled.”⁵³

Finally, the term context-oriented approach “refers to a heterogeneous group of schools and methodologies which do not regard literary texts as self-contained, independent works of art but try to place them within a larger context.”⁵⁴ So, we could make reference to “new historicism approach, which builds on post-structuralism and deconstruction, with their focus on text and discourse, but adds a historical dimension to the discussion of literary texts.”⁵⁵

Similarly, related to new historicism is the independent movement called “cultural studies.” Mario Klarer defines it as a literary movement, which purpose was to analyse “the different aspects

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 90. An example which has often been cited in this context is the mental state of Hamlet in Shakespeare’s drama; psychoanalytic critics ask whether Hamlet is mad and, if so, from which psychological illness he is suffering. Sigmund Freud, too, borrowed from literary texts in his explanations of certain psychological phenomena. Some of his studies, among them the analysis of E.T.A Hoffmann’s story “The Sandman”, rank among the classical interpretations of literary texts.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 90.

⁵² Ibid, p. 90.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 90. The Reader-centred approaches also examine the readership of a text and investigate why, where, and when it is read.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 91. According to Mario Klarer, “Depending on the movement, this context can be history, social and political background, literary genre, nationality, or gender. The most influential movement to this day is literary history” (p.91). See Marxist literary theory. On the basis of the writings of Karl Marx (1818–83) and literary theorists, including Georg Lukacs (1885–1971) and Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), texts are analysed as “expressions of economic, sociological, and political factors”.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 92. Mario Klarer says that “one of the leading figures in new historicism, Stephen Greenblatt (1943–), has analysed a colonial text of early American literature by Thomas Harriot (c. 1560–1621), comparing the relationship between Europeans and Indians in this text with the structures of dependence in Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest* (c. 1611). As a result, the mechanisms of power are exposed as deeply rooted cultural structures which dominate the historical as well as the literary discourses of the time.” (p.93).

of human self-expression, including the visual arts, film, TV, commercials, fashion, architecture, music, popular culture, etc., as manifestation of a cultural whole.”⁵⁶

Furthermore, Mario Klarer sees the feminist literary theory as “the most productive and, at the same time, most revolutionary movement of the younger theories of literary criticism in general and the contextual approaches in particular”.⁵⁷ He notices that “although gender is always at the centre of attention in this school, this particular movement may be used to demonstrate how different approaches in literary studies tend to overlap.”⁵⁸ I think that this remark is particularly important to my thesis, since I am also using different approaches to interpret Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Carvalho’s *Vou lá visitar Pastores*.

Still regarding literary criticism, Mario Klarer notes that it “can refer to the literary interpretation of texts as well as their evaluation.”⁵⁹ Literary awards and book reviews are usually one of the results of literary interpretation or evaluation.

Having said that, another question can be asked. How does literary theory relate to the history of criticism? Literary criticism is perpetually concerned with the definition of literature. Many issues raised in the field of literature, like those found on the pages above, are equally relevant for literary criticism. As Steven Hale has put it in one of his essays with which I agree,

Literary criticism is an extension of this social activity of interpreting. One reader writes down his or her views on what a particular work of literature means so that others can respond to that interpretation. The critic's specific purpose may be to make value judgments on a work, to explain his or her interpretation of the work, or to provide other readers with relevant historical or biographical information. The critic's general purpose, in most cases, is to enrich the reader's understanding of the literary work. Critics typically engage in dialogue or debate with other critics, using the views of other critics to develop their own points. Unfortunately, when critics assume that their readers are already familiar with previous criticism, the argument may be difficult to follow.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 93.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 94.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 94.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 100.

⁶⁰ <http://facstaff.gpc.edu/~shale/humanities/composition/handouts/crit.html> last access in 2016.

Nevertheless, literary criticism is not only concerned with issues of evaluation or with issues of appreciation; it is also sceptical about the foundation of its subject matter. Why sceptical? Because it never sees the result of any textual evaluation as an end in itself, but always as a new beginning for many other evaluative readings which can be done.

David Hume called scepticism as an illness which can never be radically cured, but returns upon us every moment, however we may chase it away.⁶¹ I think there is much reason in what David Hume says.

I think Hume saw scepticism as some kind of disease which people must live with day and night and which cannot be totally dodged or cured. Certainly, he compares it with some kind of chronic disease in the body of someone looking for health and with which one will eventually learn how to live. In a nutshell, Hume gave emphasis on the importance of scepticism for literary criticism. A critic must never be happy with sporadic readings or interpretations of a text. He or she must always be suspicious about what apparently appears to be a great discovery.

This means that there is no literary criticism without a “hermeneutic of suspicion.” Texts are believed to have unexpected hidden surprises waiting to be revealed by all those readers who approach them critically. Usually, such readers are advised to be prepared to encounter hidden surprises every time they read or interpret them.

From this perspective, literature is seen hypothetically as a territory of unimaginable twists and nuances to be faced by whoever gets involved in the serious business of critical reading while searching for meaning and understanding. Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunning suggest that “the odd thing, in fact, about literature as an imagined territory is that there are apparently no natural limits and hence, it would seem, there are apparently no natural limits to the field of literary criticism.”⁶²

Moreover, aligned with literary criticism theory is the reader-response criticism, briefly mentioned above, which was developed by critics such as Roland Barthes, Noam Chomsky and

⁶¹ See his book entitled David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748), pp. 11 – 18. Available online <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/hume1748.pdf> accessed in September 2016.

⁶² Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunning, “Introduction”, in *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformation of Literary Studies*, New York: Modern Languages Association, 1992, p. 6.

Christopher Norris. This theory is crucial in order to understand the twists and nuances encountered and hidden in the text to be read or interpreted.

That implies that the depth of a particular reading act also depends on the ability of interpreting of the reader, i.e., the person's ability to respond to literary twists and nuances hidden in the text. An intelligent reading depends on a number of complex and predefined criteria which may render it understandable. This means that the subject is as important as the text in the act of reading and interpreting. There is no intelligibility without the mediation of an informed subject who makes the text and the reading process intelligible. Therefore, the role of consciousness and unconsciousness in literature cannot be but crucial. This means that the attitude, the psychological disposition and the intelligence of the readers do count in the act of reading or interpreting a text.

Literary criticism also appeals to the underlying structures found in the text. Like a symphony, a picture or a machine, the literary text is designed within a structural format where each one of its parts is meant to be functional and not simply a mere sum.

For example, if the musicians do not use the treble clefs, the notes and the pauses without the necessary scientific order, they cannot create any symphony but a cacophony. If a painter does not combine the colours he wants to use and the landscapes he imagines painting there cannot be any valuable art as a result.

The same thing occurs in a literary text. When we read a novel or a poem, it is easy to notice that the events that are being narrated carry some either explicit or implicit order, previously adopted by the author, which might eventually lead to a desired ending. But not always the author himself/herself is deeply aware of this order he/she creates.

Accordingly, how would one define structure? Structure is meant here as the organization of parts or units of a certain literary text in a coherent and significant order either in terms of textual content as a whole or in terms of form.

In that way, it is right to say that there are underlying structures in all literary texts which becomes the basis of the structuralist theory. Some theorists have tried to reconcile structuralist theory with a natural or intuitive approaches to texts. Among these theorists is Jonathan Culler with his *Structuralist Poetics* (1975). In his view, the proper task of theory is to "provide a legitimating framework or system for insights which a competent reader should be able to arrive at and check

against his sense of relevance and fitness.”⁶³ I think that every relatively competent reader is capable of finding some logic in whatever he or she is reading. Nevertheless, to understand certain complex texts, one will need to be formally trained and relatively proficient in it.

Where does it all leave my thesis? My thesis is certainly located in the field of literary criticism. This approach tends to include and take all other theoretical approaches to literature very seriously and in a well-adjusted way. Most literary critics defend that all these approaches seem to overlap whenever someone is reading and interpreting a particular text with the purpose of finding meaning and understanding. And that is exactly what I am doing, i.e., trying to integrate all these approaches to find meaning and understanding through fiction, as said in the introduction.

Thus, my critical reading and interpretation of the texts in this research is not only located in the field of literary criticism but also related to the concepts of ethnography and fiction as it is being persistently suggested here. Why would I state that? Straightforwardly, because ethnography and fiction are two central concepts in the fields of cultural studies and literary criticism, and my thesis is aligned with this perspective. In the following section I further elaborate on this.

2. 2. 2. Ethnography and Fiction

As mentioned by Mario Klarer,

Cultural studies adopts a comprehensive perspective, which attempts to grasp culture’s multi-faceted nature. As early as 1958 the theorist Raymond Williams (1921–88) in *Culture and Society* argued in favour of a cultural understanding which takes into consideration the whole of cultural production rather than isolated details.⁶⁴

Among this cultural production we find, of course, fiction as well as artefacts. Both fiction and art are material manifestations or spiritual expressions of culture, and culture is a human product. Ethnography studies, interprets, classifies and describes all this cultural production of men and women.

Let me start with the definitions of each one of these two terms to clarify this claim. Its clarification will help me engage in a more thorough theoretical discussion, which will eventually lead

⁶³ Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Mario Klarer, *An Introduction to Literary Studies*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 93.

to the understanding of different issues emerging within literature as a whole, within African literatures, and especially within the colonial and postcolonial representations of Africa as a whole.

Most dictionaries define ethnography as a scientific description of the culture of a society by someone who has lived in it. Contemporary ethnography, for example, emphasizes fieldwork as a criterion *sine qua non* for considering an ethnographic study complete and scientific. This implies that a researcher must live among people or in an area expected to be studied and described.

Studying and describing places or peoples is not something new. Herodotus did it many years ago (5th century BC). He wrote of some fifty or more different peoples he encountered or heard of, making remarks on their languages, laws, social customs, religion and appearance. Malinowski wrote several ethnographies of the Trobriand Islands (1915). Margaret Mead wrote about the Samoa (1925). However, not all of them lived in fact among the people or in the zones they described. Many of these studies or descriptions were products originating in secondary sources, but in certain cases ethnographically relevant because of the amount and kind of information they exposed.

In fact, I see fieldwork as some kind of rite of passage a cultural anthropologist must go through. In other words, without fieldwork, probably there is no ethnography whatsoever, as it was traditionally defended. However, it is important to mention that while in the past ethnography related more to communities rather than to individuals, contemporary ethnographies have now opted for the observation of the individuals, focusing and concentrating on the description of current circumstances rather than historical events. This means that ethnographic studies are no longer restricted to small primitive societies but may also focus on social units such as urban ghettos and on the texts produced as a result of these studies.

No doubt, the tools of the ethnographer have changed radically since Malinowski's time. For example, ethnographers have taken full advantage of technological developments such as motion pictures and tape recorders to expand their written accounts.⁶⁵

The word fiction, on the other hand, is a Latin word (*facere*) which means to fabricate or to produce artefacts. In some literatures, fiction is seen as a false report or statement which you pretend

⁶⁵ What is also interesting to notice is the fact that many ethnographers had no idea that their writings would have been extremely and theoretically challenging with ideological and aesthetic implications for their future readers, each one within his or her social *milieu*.

to be true. For example, the expression 'Science Fiction' denotes some kind of imaginary facts or beings projected either to the past or to the future. The idea of falseness is implicit in it.

However, in my thesis the word fiction has been used with the meaning of a type of text, which is written with the purpose of conveying a message based on "real or imagined worlds,"⁶⁶ characters and events, yet it tells a story which can instruct or delight readers. Albert Camus once said ironically that "fiction is the lie through which we tell the truth."⁶⁷ Yet, it is a very deep aphorism. It makes one think.

In that context, a fiction could be a result of an ethnographic piece of work carried out by an ethnographer, anthropologist or literary critic while studying, describing and evaluating a society or particular people of interest or while locked in his or her room with a pen and a piece of paper writing about them, imagining or pretending to be among these people. I would call these writings some kind of ethnographic fictions. In the past, many of these ethnographic fictions⁶⁸ were born as a consequence of participant observation in certain social *milieu*, but many writers were unaware of the ethnographic role they played. Then, what was unthinkable of was the amount of theoretical jargon produced as a result, many of which have become outstanding literary and ethnographic stories worth consulting. Rose De Angelis, for instance, argues that

Literary writers are ethnographers by virtue of the fact that they write stories about people and their sentiments, about places and happenings, and about contexts. Characteristically, the ethnographer participates, either overtly or covertly, in the daily lives of a group of people, watching, listening, and collecting data that will shed light on the observed subject or subjects. In literature, the writer/observer shares a piece of the other, and the overlapping pieces provide a window through which the reader may gain insights – social and cultural data – into particular cultures and societies. Reading the text as a cultural artefact becomes a way of participating in social research. The writer/ethnographer presents information to the reader/participant who acts as both subject and object as he or she reads the information presented and makes his or her own observations. Historians, classics, folklorists, mythologists,

⁶⁶ Morroe's book title, cited above.

⁶⁷ www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/51889.albert_camus

⁶⁸ Fictional ethnographies: terminology used here to mean local or global literatures written as a result of fieldwork research, but which can develop inter-ethnic understanding through fiction.

archaeologists, and ethnographers have all cited literary works for purposes of creating and interpreting the past or for identifying cultural patterns.⁶⁹

In addition, she observes that scholars like Andrew Lang, Jane Harrison, Sabatino Moscati, Johannes Brondsted, and Ruth Benedict, to name just a few, have also searched literary sources for ethnographic data.⁷⁰

Reading James Clifford, however, one perceives that ethnographic writing is determined in at least six ways. Firstly, 'it draws from and creates meaningful social *milieu*' which he called *contextual determination*; secondly, 'it uses and is used by expressive conventions' which he called *rhetorical determination*; thirdly, it is written within, and against, specific traditions, disciplines and audiences, which he called *institutional determination*; fourthly, an ethnography may be distinguishable from a novel or travel account. Actually, it is more than that. Clifford has called it a *generic determination*; fifthly, it is observed that in some ethnographic writing the authority to represent cultural realities is unequally shared and at times contested, which James Clifford has called *political determination*; sixthly, it might be said that all these conventions and constraints mentioned above keep changing and are historically determined, which he called *historical determination*.⁷¹

Furthermore, J. Clifford in *The Predicament of Culture* apart from addressing the issues of culture and ethnography in depth, also sought to understand the discussion concerning ethnography and authority and how it is related to literary criticism and literary theory.⁷²

Ana Martinho, paraphrasing him, while addressing the importance of African ethnographic writings, has said that

Many African authors have used ethnographic writing as a tool to establish closeness with the people they wanted to represent, describe, and motivate. Appropriate representations and perceptions were not easy to disseminate though, due in part to the disparate reading of differences and to cultural portraits of disputed generalization. Thus, the articulated perception of misrepresentation creates in this

⁶⁹ Rose De Angelis (ed.), *Between Anthropology and Literature: interdisciplinary discourse*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 3 – 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 4.

⁷¹ See James Clifford and George Marcus (ed.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, California: University of California Press, 1986, p. 6.

⁷² See James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

context an uncomfortable place for the African writer, but seems to work as well as a protective filter on political grounds.⁷³

From the perspective of fiction, yet again quoting Martinho, it was said that

Most of the modern African narratives are not merely reproductions of the so-called traditional oral stories and histories. They are cultural testimonies of national travellers, and epitomize transitions experienced as well as symbolic, cartographic, and cultural routes. Research from a combined perspective of Anthropology and Literature can illuminate some aspects of the discontinuities in cultural identification between the intellectuals and their “tribes.” From this perspective, postcolonial societies and their cultures can be read through a localized anthropological gaze, since they tend to accept literature as cultural testimony. Such literature emerges from a resilient context of long-term war and post-war experience.⁷⁴

These two theoretical justifications are fundamental in reading African literature and ethnography, for example, because they accept literature and ethnography as cultural testimony and experience.

However, the issues that would probably emerge out of it are the problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research (Margaret D. Leconte). The results of ethnographic research are often regarded as unreliable and lacking validity and potential of generalisation. Some ethnographers ignore such criticisms. Others recognize potential threats to the credibility of their techniques for inter-comprehension across research disciplines and traditions.⁷⁵

Notwithstanding that, I think that ethnography is a way forward to interpret such literatures “emerging from a resilient context of long-term war and post-war experience”, as stated by Ana Maria Martinho.

As observed by J. Van Maanen, “Ethnographies sit between two worlds or systems of meaning: the world of the ethnographer and the world of cultural members. Ethnographies are documents that pose questions at the margins between two cultures.”⁷⁶

⁷³ Ana Maria Martinho Gale, *The Protean Web: Literature and Ethnography in Lusophone Africa*, Lisboa: Edições Colibri, p. 10.

⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 10 – 11.

⁷⁵ See Cicourel, 1964; Denzin, 1978; Pelto, 1978.

⁷⁶ J. van Maanen, *Tales of the Field*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988, p. 4.

Moreover, Larry Diamond emphasizes that “the literature of a society tells us much about its culture, social structure and even politics”.⁷⁷ This also means that, regarding fiction, one could say that “the fiction of a certain country, culture or period may reveal more of its values, customs, conflicts, stresses, changes and transformations than does all the formal scholarship of historians and social scientists.”⁷⁸

Larry Diamond still goes on to say that “in particular, fiction may give us special insights into how culture and history intersect with and reshape, or are reshaped by, the lives of people, ordinary and extraordinary. For these reasons, literature may provide a precious and indispensable window into a society, a people and an era.”⁷⁹

Larry Diamond raises two important questions here: literature seen as a mediator of history and as a history recorder, some kind of archive of historical, social, cultural and political events of certain people, therefore, some kind of ethnography to keep and pass on.

In his remarks, Diamond sees literature and fiction as having exactly the same function: “the literature of a society tells us much about its culture, social structure and even politics” and “fiction may give us special insights into how culture and history intersect with and reshape, or are reshaped by, the lives of people, ordinary and extraordinary.”

For Diamond, literature is fiction and fiction is literature, bearing in mind that the fiction may provide a “precious and indispensable window into a society, a people and an era.” This thesis is aligned with this perspective.

For him and for me as well, “fiction is more than a passive reflection of society and history. It is also an active influence, reinforcing or refashioning values, beliefs, ideas, perceptions and aspirations.”⁸⁰ Of course, Achebe’s and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho’s texts seem to have achieved that as I will show in chapters five and six. Diamond adds that

The teller of a story can become a powerful force in shaping the way a people think about their social and political order, and the nature, desirability and direction of change. Among other things, literature may affect the way people think about politics,

⁷⁷ Larry Diamond, “Fiction as Political Thought: *Anthills of the Savannah* by Chinua Achebe” in *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 352 (Jul., 1989), p. 435.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 435.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 435.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 435.

about culture, about people and about writings (my emphases), the way they perceive their political system, and the approach they embrace to the challenge of political change. The novel, then, may be an agent of political culture, and the novelist a political philosopher and teacher.⁸¹

Accordingly, Achebe and Carvalho can be considered as two novelists playing the roles of political philosophers and teachers, as stated by Diamond.

My critical reading and interpretation of *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá visitar Pastores* are in line with the concepts of ethnography and fiction defended by Diamond; all in all, because “in literature, the writer/observer shares a piece of the other, and the overlapping pieces provide a window through which the reader may gain insights – social and cultural data – into particular cultures and societies. Reading the text as a cultural artefact becomes a way of participating in social research.”⁸²

One will note that the literary and ethnographic approaches are continually present in my reflections. Equally, I use the social construction and representation theories in order to gain social and cultural understandings about the Igbo and Kuvale cultural landscapes as described in *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*. Why? Because the theories of social construction and representation are one of key concepts of sociology of knowledge given that they refer to the way we can create and acquire meanings through social interaction with others. They try to understand how realities such as language, symbols, colour, food, gestures, people and race are socially conceived, constructed and eventually learned. This is crucial.

2. 2. 3. Social Construction and Representation

What is social construction and what is representation then? Knowing that human beings cannot live isolated or detached from their fellow human beings as observed by Aristotle, so understanding how social and cultural realities are constructed and represented collectively and beliefs held for ages, cannot be less important for ethnography and literature. I use these two concepts because I want to understand how categories, myths, stories and metaphors are usually constructed and represented by people like Igbo and Kuvale and how the novelists under analysis constructed and conveyed cultural meanings through literature and anthropology.

⁸¹ Idem, Ibid,

⁸² Rose De Angelis (ed.), *Between Anthropology and Literature: interdisciplinary discourse*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 3 – 4.

To begin with, it is important to mention that there have been various uses of the metaphor “construction” and that processes of construction seem to differ with the types of objects that can be constructed. For example, for Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, it is used to refer to the “construction of both facts and things”; for Trevor Pinch and Wiebe Bijker, it refers to the “construction of knowledge” (technology); and for Karim Knorr-Cetina, it refers to “Research Program”.⁸³

Consequently, four types of meaning of construction can be inferred: first, the “construction through the interplay of actors of institutions, including knowledge, methodology, fields, habits and regulative ideals;” second, the “construction by scientists of theories and accounts, in the sense that these are structures that rest upon bases of data and observations;” third, the “construction through material intervention of artefacts in the laboratory; fourth, the construction in the neo-Kantian sense of the objects of thoughts and representation.”⁸⁴

It should be stressed, however, that the origin of the phrase «social construction» is found in Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman’s book entitled *The Social Construction of Reality*, which claims that “reality is socially constructed and processes of social construction should be the focus of sociology of knowledge.”⁸⁵ For these sociologists, reality refers to subjective reality, or people’s beliefs about the world. It also refers to the rest of the real world: “objective reality or that which cannot be wished away.”

Therefore, one can talk of society as objective reality and as a subjective reality: a product of both subjective and objective causes. For this reason also, some authors would appeal to the fact that in sociology of knowledge it is important to understand how societies are culturally constructed.

Retaking the subjects such as language, symbols, colour, food, gestures, people, race, referred to earlier, I should ask the following question: how are these concepts culturally or socially constructed and learned?

Let me take language first. A language is a system of sounds, and sometimes figures, to which we collectively attach meaning, and it means different things for different people. As claimed by Claire Kramsch, “particular meanings are adopted by the speech community and imposed in turn on

⁸³ See Sergio Sismondo, “Some Social Constructions” in *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Aug., 1993). Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/370258> .Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:01, p. 516.

⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 516 – 517.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 517.

its members, who find it then difficult, if not impossible to say or feel anything original.”⁸⁶ For example, the roses: roses seen as flowers, as fragrance and as expressions of love. One sees here nature and culture bound together to create new meanings. In this sense, both oral cultures and literate cultures find their own ways of emancipating and constraining their members to new meanings culturally interwoven.

Quoting C. Kramsch once more, I should say that

The screws that language and culture impose on nature correspond to various forms of socialization or acculturation. Etiquette, expressions of politeness, social dos and don'ts shape people's behaviour through child rearing, behavioural upbringing, schooling, professional training. The use of written language is also shaped and socialized through culture. Not only what it is proper to write to whom in what circumstances, but also which text genres are appropriate (the application form, the business letter, the political pamphlet), because they are sanctioned by cultural conventions. These ways with language, or norms of interaction and interpretation, form part of the invisible ritual imposed by culture on language users.⁸⁷

Claire Kramsch also claims that “this is certainly the cultures' way of bringing order and predictability into people's use of language.”⁸⁸ Perhaps I should emphasize here that “invisible ritual imposed by culture on language users” and “bringing order and predictability” are ways of teaching or sanctioning the members of a certain speech community. I think this matters enormously in the process of social construction. It means that processes such as socialization, enculturation or acculturation can be instructive or destructive. The effectiveness of these processes can either happen intentionally or involuntarily.

Human beings are creators of their own culture and *ipso facto* its products as well. They create symbols which represent their “real and imagined worlds”⁸⁹ and, eventually, these same worlds represent them in return.

Similarly, symbols are things that stand in for another thing, a result of conventions of use imposed upon us by our speech communities. For example, the colours of the Angolan flag, in which

⁸⁶ Claire Kramsch, *Language and Culture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 5.

⁸⁷ Ibid, pp. 5 – 6.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

⁸⁹ This expression was taken from Morroe's book, as cited before.

the red colour, standing for the blood spilt by people to fight for their independence, the black colour, meaning the African continent, and the yellow colour, standing for the national wealth, are commonly held by the Angolans not because these meanings were naturally bestowed upon them. No, they were not and they will never be. These are conventions of use. Effectively, symbols are conventions of use socially constructed and learned. They are usually associated with certain ideas, things or groups of people or even divinities.

In fact, symbols can characterize, identify, recognize, include or exclude certain entities. The confederate flag in America, which was used to exclude African-Americans, is an example of this exclusion. Now and then, these representations contain categories and ideas of superiority which can intentionally exclude or oppress others which are believed to be less powerful or intelligent.

Among these examples, we find stereotypes describing the indigenous American Indians as inferior and associating them generally with nature, and nature, *strictu sensu*, implied primitiveness, nakedness and “poverty” or black people, associated usually with darkness, and darkness, *strictu sensu*, implied primitiveness, ignorance, fear, poverty and obscurity or the absence of illumination.

Then, why do social constructions and representations matter? I think it is because of what they tend to describe and because they are essentially and collectively held conventions. One cannot expect a particular construction or representation to be held only by a single individual and for a great number of years or to be simply replaced with another and at the same time expect an individual or people to conform to it and act accordingly, without being imposed by his/her community. The community is probably the most powerful force behind the tenure of cultural symbols or beliefs.

For example, the skin problems in the American continent was, is and will probably continue to be a very serious social problem for many more years to come despite the efforts which have been carried out by the American government. It seems to me that the stand against it is still weak, because there has not been an effective involvement of the whole American community. Unless it is communally addressed and fought against, it will not fade away unfortunately.

However, I must admit that social constructions and representations do change with time and all the time. Groups or speech communities may actively try to renegotiate meanings or be forced to adopt them by a social process called acculturation, a process which can cause either alienation or liberation. In this sense, social movements can be understood partly as collective efforts to change

fixed or negative ideas about the world, peoples and cultures. New social constructions and representations can become powerful cultural tools with which to create and convey new meanings within a speech community and bring about the change it needs.

Thus, social construction and representation can be theorized together with concepts like literary criticism, ethnography and fiction. They all try to interpret, understand and describe culture as a human phenomenon.

As said earlier, one of the fundamental notions in the social construction theory is that the reality of specific groups can be objectified in symbols and represented through art and language. So, to represent is to communicate, to speak, to stand for or to act on behalf of someone else or to describe something or someone. In this sense, representation is an act of speaking of or describing someone or something; it is an act of pretending to be what you or others are or are not; it can be described as a positive or negative, true or false, blurred or optimistic way of thinking or writing about others.

Edward Said in his *Orientalism* gives examples of negative or false representations. He develops a conceptual theorization of the representations of colonized peoples by the Western colonizers, that is, of the Orientals by the Westerners. For him, the West has not represented the Orient adequately and the political and economic relations between the two worlds have never been on an equal basis. These relations are characterized by imperialist discourses and attitudes, that is, by economic exploitation and cultural alienation.⁹⁰

Thus far, the West believed that it was the only civilization authorized to speak and write on behalf of other civilizations. Could we say that this attitude has finally changed? I am afraid it has not. History goes on witnessing disproportions in the relation between the West and the rest of the World. This is mostly experienced in the spheres of economy, politics, science, business and literature. The West continues to misrepresent the least developed countries. The language it uses is usually symptomatic and strong. We often hear words like: *third world, poor people, underdeveloped countries, band of refugees and illiterate, corrupt and violent, Negro and uncivilized*, just to mention a few.

⁹⁰ See Edward Said, *L'orientalisme: l'orient créé par l'occident*. Paris: Édition du Seuil, 2003, p. 19.

This is much conspicuous in literature, in which African cultures and people were misrepresented. I will say plenty more about it in chapter five, where among other things, I review post-colonial imperialism, discourse and cultural hegemony. But it should be remarked for now that most African literatures were lumped or represented altogether into the “rather amorphous category of “Third World” literatures, an attitude which prevented many westerners and even some Africans or “Africanists””⁹¹ from learning the important aspects of the African writings and people.

In the following section, I focus on some of these African writings (especially Nigerian and Angolan), on the literary significance and the descriptive value they epitomize as well as on the important role they continue to play in unshackling the African continent out of poverty. Albert S. Gérard’s *European-Language: Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Tanure Ojaide’s article about “Modern African literature and Cultural Identity”, Joseph Bruchac’s article about “Third World Writing Today” in *Negro American Literature Forum*, Ana Maria Martinho’s *Cânones Literários e Educação: os Casos Angolano e Moçambicano* and others will constitute the foundation of the historical and critical analysis that follows.

2. 3. Africa: Major African Literatures and Ethnographic works

It was not so long ago when it was felt in this country that the only legitimate tradition in literature was the Western Tradition. Perhaps this is less frequently said now than two or three decades ago when writers such as Lionel Trilling would say there is no such thing as African literature, or even fifty years ago when the Black American writer George Schuyler would engage in a heated literary debate with Langston Hughes over what Schuyler called “The Negro Art Hokum” (Schuyler said there was no such thing as “Negro Art” in America, only American Art), but I still get the impression, especially from tenured members of English Departments, that many people believe that Black Studies, Chicago Studies, Native American Studies, African Studies and

⁹¹ Africans who believe that what they write or say about Africa and its people can help put the continent back on cultural, political and economic progress. But once one reads or hears what they propose for Africa, one quickly realizes that it can usually cause more harm than joy when compared to what was done by those who colonized Africa long before. What they write or propose is simply a curse rather than a blessing in disguise. This includes people like Pieter Willem Botta, the ex-prime Minister of South Africa and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, just to name a few.

all "ethnic-oriented" courses in general will quickly give way to real literature when their faddishness wears off.⁹²

This analysis begins with Joseph Bruchac's stand concerning the hypothetical "Negro Art Hokum" experienced in America and elsewhere, which certainly raises questions about the existence or not of African literature as a whole. In the quotation above, Leonel Trilling said "there is no such thing as African literature" and "Schuyler said there was no such thing as "Negro Art" in America, only American Art." Were they right? Absolutely not. They got it wrong.

According to Bruchac, in the past, the western tradition was believed to be the only legitimate tradition in literature, a view that has changed through time, of course. Langston's stand against Lionel Trilling and George Schuyler's remarks defend the existence of African literature, whether in Africa, America or wherever black people might be after being swept away by the waves of slavery or migration. Nevertheless, Schuyler calls "Negro Art Hokum" to all Black Studies, Chicago Studies, Native American Studies and African Studies.

In Europe, for example, some simply called African literature as an "orature" and others did not even recognize it as existing. For most of them, there was not such a thing as African literature, but only an extension of European literature in or about Africa, because of the language in which most of those African texts were written: English, French, Portuguese, Italian, German and Spanish. During the course of time, views like these ones have triggered all sorts of theoretical discussions before being abandoned. I hope my analysis will contribute somehow to enrich these theoretical discussions and provide a better understanding of it. It is supported by historical, anthropological and ethnographical studies about Africa.

Unfortunately, for a long time the blindness shown by many western critics towards what they called "Negro Art" and simply "orature" has "prevented them from looking objectively at the writing coming from the continent they lumped together into the rather amorphous category of Third World." This blindness also prevented these westerners from "seeing the truly important aspects of the writings of "Third World" people and also (and most importantly) how those writings speak not

⁹² Joseph Bruchac, "Third World Writing Today" in *Negro American Literature Forum*, Vol. 10, No.2 (Summer, 1976), pp. 60 – 63.

just to isolated ethnic groups but to humanity as a whole.”⁹³ What does “Negro Art” stand for, then? Here, “Negro Art” stands for African literature.

One must admit that today pessimistic attitudes towards African literature are somehow changing, although some prejudice is still being experienced from time to time in relation to certain literary works coming directly from Africa, in spite of displaying some proven literary richness in content and form. Looking at the vast and qualitative amount of African texts being published every year, one wonders how many more questions the pessimists will have to ask about them.

In fact, this massive literary production experienced in many African countries should urge African literary critics to construct an African literary canon, which can integrate the best of Africa in terms of literature and ethnography and, eventually, “compete” with the greatest western writers. I think African writers can dream about it. The possibility of integrating their works in the world literary canon is not an anathema. *Where there is will, there is way.*

Nevertheless, this also means that the way in which works of art are universally evaluated and canonized should be re-examined. This implies that the principles of canonicity must be renegotiated in the light of many works of art from different parts of the world. I think the question today is: what literary works should we include or exclude from the World Canon? This is probably one of the toughest questions faced with literary theory today.

Going back to where I started in this subchapter, five questions can be asked: What is African literature then? Does it truly exist? Where and when did it originate? Who were its creators? What is the state of it now? Tanure Ojaide, in his article entitled *Modern African Literature*, begins by saying that

Modern African literature has gained recognition worldwide with such classics as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Weep Not Child*, and Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. This recognition was reinforced by Soyinka's winning of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986. Modern African literature is written in indigenous African languages and in European languages used in Africa. Written African literature is very new compared to the indigenous oral tradition of literature which has been there and is still very much alive. While there are literary works in Yoruba, Hausa, Zulu and Sotho, among others, this literature in African indigenous

⁹³ Ibid, p. 199.

languages is hardly known outside its specific linguistic frontiers. Writers such as Mazisi Kunene, Ngugi wa Thiongo and the late Okot p'Bitek first wrote some of their works in African languages before translating them into English. Most African writers, however, write in English, French, and Portuguese. There is the Eurocentric temptation to see modern African literature written in these European languages as an extension of European literature. However, after modern imperialism, language alone cannot be the sole definer of a people's literature.⁹⁴

I think Tanure Ojaide has said it all. For him, African literature is all literary work written either in the vernacular or in European languages which involves a consideration of aesthetic modes in their intimate correlation to the cultural and social structures which determine and define the expressive schemes of African peoples and societies. It includes both oral and written works which are a result of their encounter with African and other peoples, cultures and languages.

Nonetheless, it would be a great mistake to think that African literature begins only after this encounter between indigenous African languages and European languages used in Africa or that it is solely a creation of Europe, fruit of its colonial and civilizational presence in Africa or that language alone is the sole definer of a people's literature.

African oral tradition is also defended here as literature because most of written literature is a product of orality. Written poems, songs, proverbs and axioms started as oral expressions before being written down. Ojaide observes that "modern African literature has gained recognition worldwide with such classics as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Weep Not Child*, and Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*."⁹⁵ However, it does not mean that before these classics there was not any relevant written tradition or work in Africa.

Historically speaking, great areas of Sub-Saharan Africa have already been familiarized with spelling and written literature, long before the white people – explorer– reached their coasts. In reality, part of the continent already produced written works in their own languages, whilst literatures written in Celtic and Germanic languages did not exist in Western Europe yet.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Tanure Ojaide, "Modern African literature and Cultural Identity" in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Dec., 1992), p. 43.

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 43.

⁹⁶ See Albert S. Gérard (ed.) *European-Language; Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, London: John Benjamins Publishing, 1986. Gérard's work is rich in historical details about the development of African written literature as a whole.

I am certainly talking about Ethiopia, invaded by Semitic tribes from some countries of South Arabia at the beginning of the Christian era.⁹⁷ These tribes have brought their own alphabet which gradually was adapted to the transition of the Ethiopian local language. This language was known as Ghe'ez, and during various centuries it became the only agent of religious thought, of culture and literary writing. In fact, this sacred language is still being used today by some conservative writers, as the sole means of composition of hymns, theological treaties and other religious works. For a long time, Ghe'ez literature has essentially had a didactic and religious inspirational role.⁹⁸

From what appears, by the XIV century, the language spoken in the empire became very different from Ghe'ez, turning into an esoteric idiom not understood by the people. A vernacular literature emerged then in a language which was called Old Amharic. Its source of inspiration was no longer sacred, but secular. The most important works remaining from this period are called imperial songs, poems of praise in honour of rulers of the time.⁹⁹

It is only in the XX century that Amharic language began to impose itself against Ghe'ez, becoming today the main language of literary works in Ethiopia, with a big quantity of fascinating written works, not only poetry but also other genres imported from Europe, during the European colonial influence: plays, fiction in prose and narrative.¹⁰⁰

A writing art having been firmly established in Ethiopia, a second wave of literacy shook vast regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, due to the Muslim invasion during the first centuries after the Hegira. The new religion brought its own language, Arabic, and its own characters or spelling. However, the history of Islamic writing in Africa presents two distinct patterns of development.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ See Saheed A. Adejumobi, *The history of Ethiopia*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007, p. 171.

⁹⁸ See Albert S. Gérard, *European-Language; Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, London: John Benjamins Publishing, 1986.

⁹⁹ See Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (updated ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. See also Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855 – 1991* (2nd ed.), Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001.

¹⁰⁰ See Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopian Royal Chronicles*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 139 – 43.

¹⁰¹ See Tshikumambila Nyembwe, "From Folktale to short Story", in *European-Language; Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Albert S. Gérard, pp. 475 – 88. Budapest: Akadémia Kiado, 1986. See also Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes; The Challenge of Islam and the Re-unification of the Christian Empire (1769–1855)*, London: Longmans, 1968.

In East Africa, by the coasts of Indian Ocean and islands such as Zanzibar, the integration of immigrants into native society, originally from Arabic countries, created a hybrid culture with its own language, non-Arabic, known as Swahili.¹⁰²

The most ancient documents of Swahili literature, which still exists, can be tracked since the beginning of XVIII century. The main characteristic of Swahili literature is the predominance of fictional poetry. In the XVIII century, these epopees made only reference to Mohamed and his battles against Christians after the Hegira. They were inspired by the Arabic popular narratives.¹⁰³

Notwithstanding that, in the XIX century, a secularization process took place and apart from the religious epopees of traditional type, other forms of narrative poetry emerged, which reviewed the main events of this period and integrated the experiences of the Swahili community such as the antagonism between the Sultan of Zanzibar and the governors of the coastal cities and, later, the resistance shown by the tribes of the back areas against the European invasion was equally included.¹⁰⁴

In West Africa, Muslim literature developed according to a completely different pattern. Black western Africa was originally converted to Islam by the Berber dynasty of Almoravid of the XI century. This Sudanese Islam inherited the hard line fundamentalist tendency which characterized the Berber religion. Two stages can be unveiled in the historical evolution of this literature. Up to the end of the XVIII century, the Arabic language continued to be the only literary means of expression. This fact influenced the construction of Timbuktu as a famous centre of Islamic erudition during the XIV, XV and XVI centuries, as well as the composition of innumerable manuscripts which portrayed in Arabic verses the main figures of Muslim culture.¹⁰⁵

However, in the XVIII century, the Islamic fundamentalist tendency of western Africa assumed more religious features and the necessity of granting the Muslim culture and its language to people was made mandatory. So, diverse literatures appeared, known as *ajami*,¹⁰⁶ i.e., those ones which

¹⁰² See Derek Nurse and Thomas Spear, *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800 – 1500*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985, pp. 52 – 57.

¹⁰³ Ibid, pp. 32 – 51.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 32 – 42.

¹⁰⁵ See Andrea Brigaglia, “Historical Context: Notes on the Arabic Literary Tradition of West Africa,” on the webpage <http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/arbms/historical.html> accessed in 2016.

¹⁰⁶ For more information see Fallou Ngom, *Muslims beyond the Arab world: the odyssey of Ajami and the Muridiyya*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. See also Fallou Ngom’s Article, “Introducing the Ajami Literature of the West Africa,

used the Arabic alphabet for the non-Arabic languages. What I was able to find out is that the languages concerned are probably the Fulani¹⁰⁷ in various regions of western Africa, the Hausa¹⁰⁸ in the north of Nigeria and the Wolof in Senegal. In fact, it is important to stress that even today, some literary critics do write poetry in African Arabic.¹⁰⁹

The Muslim cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa have shown uncommon resistance to the impact of European culture, perhaps for believing proudly that they had one of the greatest world's religions and no reason to bow before a foreign one.¹¹⁰

Only two of these literatures – Swahili to the East and Hausa to the West - did submit to several forms of modernization and accepted Latin characters and spelling, adopting the press and even some genres like fiction in prose and drama, though with enormous reluctance. The reason for this specific evolution might have been because these territories were part of the British Empire, whose representatives, contrary to France's, Portugal's, and Spain's, gave particular attention to the native languages and to literacy campaigns in African languages.¹¹¹

This takes me to the third wave of literacy, which began to spread in all black Africa in the XIX and XX centuries. Examining diachronically the literary consequences of western colonialism, I observe that it happened in two phases, each one with its own characteristics.

During the XIX century, and even from the XX century onward, despite some occasional and fascinating experiences, but statistically less significant, the literary activity concentrated in the

on the webpage," <http://alma.matrix.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/AjamiIntroductionFallou.pdf>, accessed in 2016.

¹⁰⁷ See Pat I. Ndukwe, Ph.D. *Fulani*, New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. 1996.

¹⁰⁸ See Paul Newman, *The Hausa Language: an encyclopedic reference grammar*, Yale: Yale University Press, 1937/2000) p. 397. See also Andrew Dalby, *Dictionary of languages: the definitive reference to more than 400 languages*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 242.

¹⁰⁹ See Andrea Brigaglia, "Historical Context: Notes on the Arabic Literary Tradition of West Africa," on <http://digital.library.northwestern.edu/arbms/historical.html> retrieved in 2016.

¹¹⁰ <http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3424501553/islam-islam-sub-saharan.htm> retrieved in 2016.

¹¹¹ See Francis Robinson, "The British Empire and the Muslim world", on the webpage, <https://repository.royalholloway.ac.uk/file/af8d750b-01b1-b826-aada-267fe68b63bc/9/oupbrempmus.pdf> retrieved in 2016.

British territories especially in South Africa,¹¹² and almost entirely in vernacular languages. How do I explain this fact?

In the British colonies, cultural activities, particularly education, were in the hands of missionary societies.¹¹³ One of the dogmas of Protestantism is that each Christian has to do his or her personal interpretation of the Word of God as it is found revealed in the Bible. And the British missionaries considered translating the Bible in African languages easier and more useful than teaching English to native people. Viera Pawliková-Vilhano attests to this in the following terms.

In most regions of sub-Saharan Africa outside the reach of Islam, Africans were introduced to written literature through Christian propaganda, the very first books in their own African language were produced to advance the Christian cause. Missions of all denominations disseminated education in their attempt to win converts and to train African catechists. ‘Transforming Africa by the Africans’, was the formula advocated by Cardinal Lavigerie in his instructions to the White Fathers. “The missionaries must therefore be mainly initiators, but the lasting work must be accomplished by the Africans themselves, once they have become Christians and apostles. And it must be clearly noted here that we say: become Christians and not become French or Europeans.” Missionaries were therefore asked to adapt themselves to the Africans, to strip themselves, as much as possible, of the cultural elements peculiar to them, of their language in the first place. It was believed that without effective and active communication it was impossible to pursue the conversion of the Africans. Missionaries were requested to overcome language difficulties by devoting their spare time to the study of local African languages and by approaching Africans in their own language to minimize cultural misunderstandings and distinctions between themselves and their potential converts. To master the local African language, the White Fathers were actually forbidden to speak to each other in anything else after living six months in the country. The linguistic work and an intimate

¹¹² See Jerzy Koch, *A History of South African Literature: Afrikaans Literature 17th-19th centuries*, Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2015.

¹¹³ See the article entitled “The role of Missionaries in Colonizing Africans” published on the Webpage <http://www.globalblackhistory.com/2012/10/role-of-missionaries-in-colonization-of-africans.html> retrieved in 2016.

knowledge of the language were crucial, since through language it is possible to get to know and appreciate its cultural context and experience the relevant culture.¹¹⁴

This model was first developed in South Africa, and later in other regions. The missionaries learned native languages, spelt them and taught the new converts how to read and write (Achebe describes this in *Things fall Apart*), translated the material from the Bible and printed these translations. However, writing skills had other applications. Apart from reading the Bible and frequently helping translate it, in the first stage, the converts were encouraged to write their own texts, obviously in their native languages.

A great part of this literature in African languages, sponsored by missionaries, was and still is concerned with the edification of morality, ethics and the expansion of Christianity. Many hymns of praise were composed by native writers and some of them became particularly popular in the local congregations.¹¹⁵

The Pilgrim's Progress of Bunyan became the most translated play in the West and was imitated by numerous native authors of allegoric and moralizing novels. As the century was going by, notwithstanding that, more vernacular writers were rising up – particularly in South Africa – getting instructed and aware of the abuses perpetrated by some white people. However, the Berlin Conference, in the 1880s and the rise of imperialism, colonialism and racism simultaneously, slowed the process.¹¹⁶

With the rapid progress of industrialization and the urbanization of South Africa, after the First World War, Sub-Saharan writers began to dedicate themselves to realist fiction but, according to their diagnosis of the situation of the black population, they found it wise to put an emphasis on the failures of achieving individual morality rather than on the injustices and oppression infesting the system.

In spite of the interest in the ideas introduced by the white people and in spite of situations created by their activities, a second type of inspiration operated from the outset in vernacular literature. In fact, at least in parts of Africa under British colonial power, generations after

¹¹⁴ Viera Pawliková-Vilhano, "Christian Missions in Africa and their Role in the Transformation of African Societies," in *Asian and African Studies* (16, 2007, 2, p. 254).

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 254.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 255.

generations, new writers revealed an enormous respect for their ancient oral traditions similar to what the Celtic and Germanic people had done in the beginning of the Middle Ages. They took advantage of the education offered by missionaries and the technological progress provided by the new means of expression and strove to put into writing important fragments of their oral heritage: proverbs, poems of praise, stories, myths, fairy tales and historical chronicles. As Pawliková-Vilhano puts it

This aspect of the missionary work, the reduction of a number of African languages into a written form, the translation of the Bible, hymnbooks and prayer-books into Swahili and other East, West and South African languages and the instruction in reading and writing which went with the work of conversion, has in the long run proved to be just as important as the conversion itself. This concern for African languages developed by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries laid the foundations for literature in African languages reduced into written form. Christianization went with reading and writing, with the rise of African literatures. In this aspect the missionary work proved to be a truly creative force within the history of the African peoples and societies, transforming their lives materially and mentally perhaps more radically than any other impact before or after and perhaps more deeply than Africans themselves had imagined and realized at that time.¹¹⁷

So, we can see that although Sub-Saharan Africa, with its vast percentage of illiteracy (though decreasing these days), still has a predominantly oral culture, literature in Latin spelling or characters, however, existed since the first decades of XIX century.

Unfortunately, this production is very little known outside the continent and even among linguistic groups in Africa, despite its intrinsic value, not only as fragments of anthropological and linguistic testimony, but also historical. They deserve to be studied and translated in the most spoken languages, or better, critics should learn the languages in which these texts were written in order to be able to understand the people and the culture that produced them.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 256.

No matter what is said, it was only from the beginning of the XIX up to the middle of the XX centuries that African literature became known in the rest of the World, and this was because new generations of recognized writers chose to write in European languages.¹¹⁸

Already in the 1800s,¹¹⁹ there were in Angola native authors writing in Portuguese and during the first half of this same century some novels by native authors were written in English and French and large volumes of poetry of black authorship were published. Works such as: *Esportaneidades da Minha Alma* (1849), by José da Silva Maia Ferreira, *Nga Muturi* (1882), by Alfredo Troni, *Delírios* (1890), by Cordeiro da Matta, were written in Angola and some critics believe that these three books mark the beginning of Angolan literature.¹²⁰

However, native authors' interest in literature reached only a significant level of maturity with the creation of the Negritude movement, immediately after the Second World War. This Negritude movement was born in France under the mentorship of black students like Senghor and Césaire. But, why did the concept of Negritude, which denotes a sudden development of racial identity and of cultural values of the African intellectuals, rose among the black students in Paris? This is a difficult question to answer.

In fact, the French seem to have shown little interest in the promotion of native literature. On the other hand, many years earlier we know that there had already been English speaking African people being educated in the American Universities. It is precisely there that the question lies. All evidence shows that the French educational system ostracised African cultures and its values. Bob W. White says that

France had a very tight grip on the development of educational systems in its colonies. In 1922, France put forth a decree which further limited missionary activity in education. According to this decree, the establishment of a new school in the colonies required government permission, government-certificated teachers, a government curriculum and the exclusive use of French as the language of instruction. There are three features which can be said to characterise French colonial education in sub-

¹¹⁸ See John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 75.

¹¹⁹ See Alberto Carvalho, "Para uma Historiografia literária angolana" in *Vértice* 55, Lisboa, 1993.

¹²⁰ See Ana Maria Mão-de-Ferro Martinho, *Cânones Literários e Educação: os Casos Angolano e Moçambicano*, Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, 2001; Carlos Everdosa, *Roteiro da literatura angolana*. 2ª Ed., Lisboa: Edições 70, 1979.

Saharan Africa. First is the widespread use of the French language. There were scattered unsuccessful experiments with local languages and France would later permit the short-term use of African languages in order to meet 'immediate' pedagogical needs such as health education and morality, but all instruction had the mastery of the French language as its ultimate goal. Second is the enrolment limitation which was based on estimates of job availability for graduating students. By implementing this policy of educational supply and demand, the French Government hoped to prevent the disillusion and disorientation experienced by youths who were educated but unemployed. Third is the dual nature of the French colonial school system. African schools were intended to educate the masses. European schools, on the other hand, were more selective and were concerned with educating an African elite that could eventually fill the lower ranks of the colonial civil service {8}. The primary schools were divided into three categories: village, regional and urban. The village schools were in the African category of schools, the regional schools (fewer in number) were transitional and the urban schools were almost entirely European, following closely the French structure and curriculum.¹²¹

Contrariwise, black people living in France nurtured a vivid sentiment and an unconditional admiration for French culture and language. Most African intellectuals of French colonies, including Senghor, had never considered using another means of literary expression except the French language. Denis Ekpo writes in his article that

Though the Negritude is considered a sufficient description of what Senghor did and stood for, evidence abounds that both in his more performative thought and his political practices he had effectively sublated Negritude. Negritude was called upon to do vital preparatory work. The dynamics of Senghor's real political thought and practice were tied up with the colonial/modernity question at the frontier of decolonization. While his stance on decolonization dictated his earlier resolutely anti-nationalist politics, his passion for Africa and obsession with French culture made him an unconditional Francophile and willing neocolonized modernizer.¹²²

¹²¹ Bob W. White, "Talk about School: Education and the colonial project in French and British Africa (1860-1960)," in *Comparative Education*, Vol. 32:1, 1996, pp. 9 – 26. To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03050069628902> retrieved in 2016.

¹²² Denis Ekpo, "Speak Negritude but think and act French: the Foundations of Senghor's Political Philosophy," in *Third Text*, Vol. 24, Mar2010, Issue 2, p. 227.

In Paris, intellectual life between both World Wars was dominated by a deep reaction against the rationalist tradition of western civilization. “Rationalism” was attacked by Bergson from above and by Freud from below. Lévy-Bruhl stressed the non-rationality of what he called “primitive thinking.” The cubist painting was strongly influenced by Negro Art. Jazz became fashionable.

Lévy-Bruhl, Maurice Delafosse, Leo Frobenius, Placide Tempels, Emile Durkheim and Senghor tried to reinterpret and rewrite the history of African peoples, and, crucially, make that history relevant to contemporary political struggles of this time. Leo Frobenius in his *Histoire de la civilisation africaine* (1936) addresses in a scholarly manner the history of African peoples. He writes on the remarkable customs and traditions of the African people he found. After spending twenty years travelling to countries such as Egypt, South Africa, the Congo, Dahomey, Senegal, Nigeria and Sudan, Frobenius believed to have found traces of an “essence or a civilization” “bearing the same stamp” throughout the African continent. He wrote:

Everything has a definitive aim: harsh, severe, and tectonic. That is the main characteristic of African style. Anyone who comes close enough thoroughly to understand it, soon recognizes that it dominates all of Africa and is the very expression of its essence. It is manifest in the gestures of all Negro peoples as well as in their plastic arts. It speaks in their dances and in their masks, in their religious feelings as in their mode of existence, in their forms of government and in their destiny as peoples. It lives in their fables, their fairy tales, their legends and myths.¹²³

The black students of Paris did not wait too long to take advantage of these various tendencies. Aimé Césaire from Martinique, and Léopold Senghor, from Senegal, elaborated the concept of Negritude as an opposing image of civilization in relation to the western world, but equally valuable. Senghor later reflected on the process of this cultural awakening during those first few years in Paris in the following terms:

I have to stress over and over again that it was also Europe, that it was France which saved us... especially by teaching us the values of Black Africa. It will be remembered that the First World War had, in the view of the most lucid minds in Europe, marked some degree of bankruptcy of civilization, i.e., their civilization, through its absurdity as well as the spiritual and material ruins in its wake... Their criticism became radical

¹²³ Leo Frobenius, *Histoire de la civilisation africaine* as cited in Lilyan Kesteloot, *Black Writers in French: A Literary History of Negritude*, Howard University Press, Washington DC, 1991, p 93.

and extolled the rehabilitation of intuitive reason and of the collective soul, of archetypal images arising from the abysmal depths of the heart, from the dark regions of the groin and the womb.¹²⁴

Instead of individualism, which has characterized Europe and America, the black movement proclaimed a strong sense of solidarity, fraternity and communal life in relation to their country or racial fellows by calling them brothers and sisters.

In contrast with materialism which was spreading in industrialized societies, the black movement was deeply aware of its spiritual world. When white people practiced rationalism, black people tended more to attain knowledge through subconscious and emotional participation in the life of others and in the natural world. Recalling the growth of Negritude philosophy and accompanying black consciousness in the 1930s, Senghor wrote:

We discovered, during the years 1930 and 1934, the marvels of Desire, the Vital Force of Negro Africans. Hard years for a whole generation of young people, imprisoned in their faculties... we walked, armed with the miraculous insight of double consciousness, perceiving the marvels of the kingdom of childhood. We were reborn in Negritude. Africa sings, paints, sculpts around these new-borns, around these fiancés, around these ancestors, in the market stalls and in the fields, as at court with the princes.¹²⁵

It is not relevant here to stress whether or not these fundamental traces are truly characteristic of black people's spirit and of African societies as a whole. In reality, although the concept of Negritude came to suffer a blow due to its strong focus on race, some of its principles were generalized as a black theory. It proposed a better faultless image of Africa by gathering typical traces of all underdeveloped communities of Africa lacking any economic privileges as the "Vital force of Negro Africans."¹²⁶ Fernando Neves wrote:

O homen negro é essencialmente simbólico, no sentido mais ordinário da palavra, enquanto o seu mundo é o mundo das imagens e do concreto, e no sentido mais rico

¹²⁴ Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'Pierre Teilhard de Chardin et la politique africaine', in *Africa in Prose*, eds O. R. Dathorne and Willfried Feuser, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, p 341.

¹²⁵ Léopold Sédar Senghor, 'De la liberté de l'âme ou éloge du métissage', in *Liberté I: Négritude et Humanisme*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964, p. 99.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 99.

e mais etimológico de as realidades materiais visíveis e imediatas serem anunciadoras e portadoras de outras realidades. O que, simultaneamente, constitui uma superação da mundividência pseudo-espiritualista e pseudo-intelectualista, maniqueia e cartesiana, e da mundividência pseudo-realista e pseudo-objectiva do positivismo e do cientismo.¹²⁷

Fernando Neves identifies the Negritude as a revolutionary movement which aimed at setting the black people free. It described black people as essentially symbolic. Their spirit was thought to create arts of great symbolic value. Black people were no longer portrayed as slaves but human beings who also possessed a symbolic world containing also abundant philosophy, art and literature. In this sense, the concept of Negritude transmitted to a significant number of African writers a sense of trust in their humanity, previously denied, as well as trust in the legitimacy and dignity of their own cultural heritage. Also, the social conditions these writers experienced as well as their own cultures were sources of interesting topics which awoke the non-African public.

The days of supremacy of Negritude as a literary theme, rather than a theory, were shortly lived. They could not last for more than a decade and a half since it was not a literary theory as such, but simply an ephemeral movement which evaporated with the heat of literary criticism. As far as African literature is concerned, the French Africa seemed to be in the front position with a movement like Negritude. However, during these years, two generations of gifted writers have appeared: first, the founders, who like Senghor, were born before the First World War, and afterwards, their immediate successors, born in the 1920s. These two generations produced a significant number of works of fiction, some of great quality.¹²⁸

What they produced fits within two main categories: one draws proper inspiration from “Negritude”, i.e., it consists of poems which exalt the ways of living and the cultural values inherited from pre-colonial Africa, such as short stories inspired by oral traditions, historical novels and some plays which depict the heroic figures of the African past; the other draws inspiration more directly from the contemporary situation: the anti-colonialism, supported by younger generations from the French Africa.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Fernando Neves, *Negritude, Independência, Revolução: as Ex-colónias Portuguesas e o seu Futuro*, Paris: Edições ETC. – Paris, 1975, p. 150.

¹²⁸ See Albert S. Gérard, *European-Language; Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, London: John Benjamins Publishing, 1986.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

For some reason, an abrupt decline in quality or in quantity of literary works produced in French Africa was observed after the independence of these countries. A great number of gifted writers had been called to occupy important political, diplomatic and administrative positions. Most of them gave up their creative writing as a result. Was it the only reason? Probably not. Other fundamental factors might have also operated within these countries. I think this field requires further research.

In fact, the turmoil which characterized the first years of independences in the African countries, i. e., civil wars, military coups, economic and political corruptions, struck a heavy blow on the ideology of Negritude (a great source of inspiration for African literature in French language). However, it was made clear that Africans also possessed spirit for fine-arts, i. e., aesthetic and rational capacities to compose beautiful literary works.¹³⁰

Furthermore, the access to political independence destroyed the relevance of themes such as anti-colonialism. But new themes quickly emerged and addressed the facts in different ways in Angola. Paula Tavares's *Ritos de Passagem* and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's *Os papéis do Inglês* are examples of the themes that emerged.

I think that one cause of the decline of the literature produced in French Africa was possibly its excessive glorification of the abstract concept of Negritude. Instead, it would probably be better if it explored and analysed the actual situation of African people in the newly independent states, something Luandino Vieira does in *Nosso Musseque* and Pepetela in *A Gloriosa Família* and *Geração da Utopia*. Or, instead of voicing opposition to a colonial system, "already extinct", it would be equally interesting if it investigated the new relations of power which had developed and which controlled the socio-political structure of the newly formed states, something Edward Said did in relation to the East. But the intellectual African elite under French influence was not in a position to do this, for the simple reason that, possibly, their education and formation had alienated them from their people and from the language and concrete problems of these same people.

In reality, it was through the English and Portuguese languages that new themes emerged for the first time, earlier in the 1850s, and later in the end of 1950s and beginning of 1960s. The literary

¹³⁰ Ibid.

African achievements in English language are far more fascinating and plentiful than the French as I will show next.

However, establishing here a clear geographic distinction between South Africa, with specific factors of development, the various western African countries and the British East, whose literary evolution found itself closely correlated, is important.

The rise of literature in English among South African black writers¹³¹ resulted in the fusion of two antagonistic trends in South African social situation. The first was the improvement of education of black people since the foundation of Fort Hare College in 1916 and the second was the toughness of the Apartheid system as a result of the victory cemented by the nationalist party of Dr. Malan in the elections of 1948.¹³² The first one brought a visible improvement to the quality of the vernacular writing and fostered a sufficient understanding and knowledge of the English language by black communities. English was used as an agent of creative literature. Peter Abrahams was the first writer to become notable and his book *Mine Boy* became known at the beginning of the 1950s as a fine piece of art.¹³³ The second one, however, banned all those creative writers who opposed the Apartheid system. These writers used English with a double proposal:

On the one hand, they used it to communicate to the outside world, in words it could understand, the violence and horror of black people's situation in a society torn apart with apartheid of a small minority; on the other hand, they used it to liberate its resentment and look for an emotional relief in the artistic narratives of their own experience. Evidently, most of these works were either forbidden from circulation or simply burnt. Some writers were driven into exile and for a long time were deprived of their own land of origin and others were silenced. Nelson Mandela¹³⁴

¹³¹ See <http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/history-south-african-literature-timeline1824-2005> retrieved in 2016; <https://www.britannica.com/art/South-African-literature> <http://theculturetrip.com/africa/south-africa/articles/top-ten-south-african-writers/> accessed in 2016.

¹³² See Lindie Korf's article, "Behind Every Man: D. F. Malan and the women in his life, 1878 – 1959," Paper presented at the Southern African Historical Society (SAHS) Biennial Conference, University of Johannesburg, June 24 – 27, 2007.

¹³³ See Megan Jones, "Urbanism and Black Mobility in Peter Abrahams's *Mine Boy*" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*. Vol. 38 (1), 2012, pp. 203–215.

¹³⁴ See Nelson Mandela, *Long walk to Freedom: the Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, London: Little Brown and Company, 1995.

and Mazisi Kunene¹³⁵ are eloquent examples of this political suppression. Mazisi has not been much spoken of. Most of his literary works were originally written in Zulu and then translated into English.

However, as soon as the competence of English declined among black intellectuals, due to the Bantu Education Act of 1953, a decline in the publication of literary works was simultaneously witnessed in South Africa. This Act banned black people from joining the schools attended by white people. The literary production became less and less, as a result.¹³⁶

Clearly, these factors are not applicable to the Western and Eastern Africa zones which were still under British occupation. Quite the opposite, there were continuous publications of creative literature in the English language, especially from an original nucleus in Nigeria. This fact probably elucidates why Nigeria continued to exert a literary dominance in English speaking Africa. Apart from that, a phenomenon extremely curious and exceptional took place. Senior military chiefs encouraged literary campaigns among the black troops. As a result of the literary campaigns carried out among the black troops, during the Biafra war, the 1960s witnessed the tuition of a potential public reader reasonably vast composed of half literate workers and small business communities, to whom was added an increasing number of high school students.¹³⁷

A book industry was then set up in Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria, to meet the rudimentary literary likes of this already vast audience. Accordingly, a popular literature (focused on violence, on sex and on moral instruction, perhaps strongly influenced by the topics and language of American movies)

¹³⁵ See <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mazisi-Kunene> accessed in 2016. Mazisi (Raymond) Kunene (12 May 1930 – 11 August 2006) was a South African poet best known for his poem *Emperor Shaka the Great*. He was in exile from South Africa's apartheid regime. Kunene was an active supporter and organizer of the anti-apartheid movement in Europe and Africa. Some of his works are: *Zulu Poems*. New York, Africana Publishing Corporation, 1970; *Emperor Shaka the Great: A Zulu Epic*. London, Heinemann, 1979 (transcription and translation of traditional epic); *Anthem of the Decades: A Zulu Epic Dedicated to the Women of Africa*. London, Heinemann, 1981; *The Ancestors and the Sacred Mountain: Poems*. London, Heinemann, 1982; *Isibusiso Sikamhawu*, Via Afrika, 1994 ; *Indida Yamancasakazi*, 1995; *Amalokotho Kanomkhubulwane*, 1996; *Umwilili wama-Afrika*, Kagiso, 1996; *Igudu lika Somcabeko*, Van Schaik, 1997; *Echoes from the Mountain. New and Selected Poems by Mazisi Kunene*, Malthouse Press, 2007.

¹³⁶ See Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, eds., *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970 – 1995*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998; Nelson Mandela, *Long walk to Freedom: the Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, London: Little Brown and Company, 1995.

¹³⁷ See M. Omolewa, *Mass Literacy programmes in the next Civilian Regimes: Proceedings of the Ninth National Seminar on Functional Literacy*, Ibadan: Department of Adult Education: University of Ibadan, 1979.

grew from this industry, and it was written in an extraordinarily picturesque idiom. It was in this *milieu* that writers such as Cyprian Ekwensi learned their art.¹³⁸

Additionally, the purported Onitsha brochures initiated the genre of popular literature which became exceptional in Africa. However, it seems to me that this is not the most crucial element in the configuration of Nigerian literature in correlation with the model already represented in South Africa and in French speaking Africa. Probably, the literary growth was due to the evolution of the educational system in Nigeria. The foundation of the university college in Ibadan, in 1947, is certainly the visible result of this evolution of the educational system.¹³⁹

Only ten years were necessary to see institutions of Higher Education producing fictional literature. Beginning with Chinua Achebe (one of the subjects of my research), and his first novel *Things Fall Apart*, 1958, great part of the 1960s's best writers was formed in Ibadan university. The fact that it was an African university graduating these writers, literary works produced by these writers claimed an important point of differentiation in comparison with Francophone, Lusophone and other Anglophone literatures in Africa.

Another direct circumstance for the growth of the literature in English language all over English speaking Africa was the foundation of the literary journal named *Black Orpheus* in the same university city of Ibadan by Germans Ulli Beier and Janheinz Jahn. The *Black Orpheus's* goal was to familiarize the Anglophone elite with the literary achievements of the black French zones. Its first numbers contained translations of French poetry by authors from Africa and West Indies. This experience spurred and challenged potential writers of English speaking countries of Western Africa. So, original works in English, instead of French translations, already filled some pages of the journal in later publications.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ See Bade Ajuwon, "Oral and Written literature in Nigeria," in *Nigerian History and Culture*, Richard Olaniyan, editor. Hong Kong: Longman Group Ltd, 1985, pp.306-318, 326.

¹³⁹ See Tekena Tamuno, *Ibadan Voices: Ibadan University in Transition*. Ibadan University Press. 1981.

¹⁴⁰ See Peter Benson, *Black Orpheus, Transition, and Modern Cultural Awakening in Africa*, California: University of California Press, 1986, p. 24. See also Ulli Beier (ed.), *Black Orpheus: An Anthology of New African and Afro-American Stories*, Nigeria: McGraw Hill, 1965.

In the middle of 1960s, Nigeria witnessed remarkable literary achievements in the English language. In reality, its literary supremacy was cemented in opposition to its French counterparts. For further details, one section is dedicated to Nigerian literature in this chapter.

From this nucleus of Nigeria, it was not long before the creative impetus spread to all English speaking countries of Western Africa. Firstly, it spreads to Ghana (Kofi Anyidoho¹⁴¹, Kofi Awoonor¹⁴²). The particularities of Nkrumah regime appear not to have borne great originality. Secondly, it reached Sierra Leone (Syl Cheney-Coker¹⁴³) in the 60s and even to the small Gambia. These two countries produced a small nucleus of writers with some merit as well. Lenrie Leopold Wilfred Peters¹⁴⁴ (1932 – 2009) was the best known Gambian novelist, poet and pedagogue.

¹⁴¹See Simon Gikandi, *Encyclopaedia of African Literature*, Routledge (2002), p. 24. One important Ghanaian writer is Kofi Anyidoho (born 1947), poet and academic. He comes from a family tradition of Ewe poets and oral artists. He was educated in Ghana and the U.S., gaining his Ph.D. at the University of Texas. He has received numerous awards for his poetry, including the Valco Fund Literary Award, the Langston Hughes Prize, the BBC Arts and Africa Poetry Award, the Fania Kruger Fellowship for Poetry of Social Vision, Poet of the Year (Ghana), and the Ghana Book Award. His poetry and academic works include: *Elegy for the Revolution* (1978); *A Harvest of Our Dreams* (1985) - Heinemann (paperback 1998); *Earth child* (1985) Woeli Publishing; *Ancestral Logic and Caribbean Blues* (1992) Africa World Press; *Praise song for the land: poems of hope & love & care* (2002); *The place I call home and other poems* (2011); *The Pan African ideal in literatures of the Black world*, Accra, Ghana Universities Press, 1989 *Transcending boundaries: the Diaspora experience in African heritage literatures*, Evanston, Northwestern University, 1995 ; *The Word Behind Bars and the Paradox of Exile*, Northwestern University Press (1997); Kofi Anyidoho and James Gibbs (ed.), *Fontom from. Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film*, Editions Rodopi B.V. (2000).

¹⁴² See Nii Ayikwei Parkes, "A Tribute to Kofi Awoonor: The Story of Sankofa", *Africa is a Country*, 1 October 2013. Kofi Awoonor (born 13 March 1935 in Wheta), poet and author. His work combines the poetic traditions of his native Ewe people and contemporary and religious symbolism to depict Africa during decolonization. He started writing under the name George Awoonor-Williams. He went to university there and went on to teach African literature at the University of Ghana. While at the University of Ghana he wrote his first poetry book, *Rediscovery*. Like the rest of his work, *Rediscovery* is based on African oral poetry. In Ghana he managed the Ghana Film Corporation and founded the Ghana Play House. He then studied literature at the University of London, and while in England he wrote several radio plays for the BBC. He spent the early 1970s in the United States, studying and teaching at universities. While in the USA he wrote *This Earth, My Brother*, and *My Blood*. Awoonor returned to Ghana in 1975 as head of the English department at the University of Cape Coast. Within months he was arrested for helping a soldier accused of trying to overthrow the military government and was imprisoned without trial. After ten months he was found guilty and released. *The house by the Sea* is about his time in jail. After imprisonment Awoonor became politically active and has written mostly nonfiction. From 1990 to 1994 Awoonor was Ghana's Ambassador to the United Nations where he headed the committee against apartheid.

¹⁴³See R. Victoria Arana, "Cheney-Coker, Syl" in *Encyclopedia of World Poetry*, InfoBase Learning, 201 Syl Cheney-Coker (born 1945) is a poet, novelist, and journalist from Freetown, Sierra Leone. Educated in the United States, he has a global sense of literary history, and has introduced styles and techniques from French and Latin American literatures to Sierra Leone. He has spent much of his life in exile from his native country, and has written extensively (in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction) about the condition of exile and the view of Africa from an African abroad.

¹⁴⁴ See [http://www.irank.org/literature/pages/5371/Lenrie-Peters-\(Lenrie-Wilfred-Leopold-Peters\).html](http://www.irank.org/literature/pages/5371/Lenrie-Peters-(Lenrie-Wilfred-Leopold-Peters).html) and <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3430900056.html>. His published works: 1964: *Poems* (Ibadan: Mbari Publications); 1967: *Satellites* (London: Heinemann, *African Writers Series* No. 37); 1971: *Katchikali* (London: Heinemann, *African Writers Series* No. 103); 1981: *Selected Poetry* (London: Heinemann, *African Writers Series* No. 238).

However, it was only at the end of 1960s that the wave of creativity spread across Eastern Africa. Some of its first writers found place for publication in *Black Orpheus*. Actually, this zone presented a multifaceted literary nature. Its creative impetus spread primarily by means of the Makerere College in Uganda and soon Kenya would join in and reveal itself much more productive than Tanzania. In Tanzania, extraordinarily poor by then, a literary production in Swahili, instead of English, was encouraged as an official policy.¹⁴⁵

Uganda was almost at the same pace with Kenya before the military coup, which brought General Amin Dada to power, was witnessed. But it soon stepped back because it drove part of its creative writers to exile. Some writers such as Okot p'Bitek¹⁴⁶ blossomed here. Okot p'Bitek was best known especially for *Song of Lawino* (a long poem dealing with the tribulations of a rural African wife whose husband has taken up urban life and who wishes everything to be westernized).¹⁴⁷

It is irrefutable that Nigeria and Kenya turned into principal centres of production of fictional literature in the English language.

I said earlier that the main literary themes in the French language had been Negritude and anti-colonialism. However, it was completely different as for the writings in English. Why was it so? One of the reasons for this was that the British system of indirect governance constituted a much more subtle way of controlling than the French centralism.¹⁴⁸ Since it maintained the traditional structures and hierarchies of African societies to a certain extent, it did not cause a great alienation of the local people (alienation which was typically the result of the French colonial policy).

This aspect was particularly relevant on the cultural ground. British missionaries, educators and administrators “rarely” revealed their prejudices towards the African languages and cultures as

¹⁴⁵ See Graham Mort, “Interviews with Contemporary Ugandan Writers”, in *Postcolonial Text*, London: Lancaster University, Vol. 8, No.1, 2013, pp. 1 – 13.

¹⁴⁶ See <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Okot-pBitek> accessed in 2016. His published works: *Lak Tar Miyo Kinyero Wi Lobo* (1953); novel in Luo, English translation *White Teeth*; *Song of Lawino: A Lament* (1966); poem, translation of a Luo original *Wer pa Lawino*; *The Defence of Lawino* (1969); alternate translation by Taban Lo Liyong; *Song of Ocol* (1970); poem, written in English; *Religion of the Central Luo* (1971) ; *Two Songs: Song of a Prisoner, Song of Malaya* (1971); poems ; *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (1971, Nairobi) ; *Africa's Cultural Revolution* (1973); essays ; *Horn of My Love*; translations of traditional oral verse. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1974; *Hare and Hornbill* (1978) folktale collection; *Acholi Proverbs* (1985); *Artist, the Ruler: Essays on Art, Culture and Values* (1986).

¹⁴⁷See Lara Rosenoff Gauvin, “In and Out of Culture: Okot p'Bitek's Work and Social Repair in Post-Conflict Acoliland” in *Oral Tradition* 28/1 (2013): 35-54. Available online:

http://journal.oraltradition.org/files/articles/28i/03_28.1.pdf accessed in 2016.

¹⁴⁸ See M. Crowder, “Indirect Rule—French and British Style”, *Africa*, 34(3), 2012, pp. 197–205.

the French would do. Probably this explains why the anti-colonialism had established itself as a dominant theme of the prose and poetry of French, even after the colonial system collapsed.

The African writers in English language rarely left room to this choice. This would be like killing a dead corpse. They generally did it with humour, and not in a caustic manner, when addressing critically the colonial period and its respective abuses.

Even the Eastern African novels about the Mau-Mau movement and the repression, which followed afterwards, dealt less with the problem than with imaginative analyses of the social, cultural, psychological and ethical causes and consequences of these still memorable and serious events.¹⁴⁹

As it was said, the modern English literature from Africa was partly produced by some elites that had received their university education in African institutions and on African ground. For this reason, it was not as strange to its own society as was the Francophone's.

These writers never stopped contributing to their own culture. They did not feel the need of reconstructing it abstractly to exalt its virtues. Like the most brilliant writers of Nigeria, Wole Soyinka¹⁵⁰, who felt that a tiger did not need to proclaim its 'tigritude'¹⁵¹, they simply assumed their blackness and praised their cultures. There was a very positive side to all of this: by maintaining close contact with their society, they were capable of showing solidarity towards the condition of their people, now in the new independent states, and doing it in a more practical way than the African writers in French language did. Maybe that also explains why the writers of the English language revealed a remarkable preference for a theme which gave more credit to their intellectual maturity since the beginning of 1950s: the criticism on African society whether traditional or modern. The authors writing in French, on the other hand, manifested a self-indulgent tendency for idealizing the

¹⁴⁹ See S.M. Alam Shamsul, *Rethinking the Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

¹⁵⁰ See James Gibbs (eds), *Critical Perspectives on Wole Soyinka*, Washington D. C: Three Continents Press, 1980. These are the main works under his authorship: *Idanre and Other Poems*. London: Eyre Methuen. 1970. *The Interpreters*. London: Heinemann. 1973. *Season of Anomy*. London: Rex Collings. 1973. *Collected Plays I*. London: Oxford University Press. 1974. *Collected Plays II*. London: Oxford University Press. 1975. *Death and the King's Horseman*. London: Eyre Methuen. 1976. *Myth, Literature and the African World*. London: Cambridge University Press. - 1989. *Mandela's Earth and Other Poems*. New York: Random House. Tala, Ibrahim Kashim. 1984. *An Introduction to Cameroun Oral Literature*. Yaounde: SOPECAM. 57

¹⁵¹ See Janheinz Jahn (trans. Oliver Coburn and Ursula Lehrburger) *A History of Neo-African Literature* (London: Faber, 1968) pp. 265-6.

past and the places at the white people's door, the burden of daily problems and the fears of Africa in general.¹⁵²

Chinua Achebe, nevertheless, wrote his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, to make obvious that the strong resistance shown by African traditional society to a new lifestyle brought by the western civilization, its lack of flexibility, its doubts, its frequent cruelty, its superstitions and cautious conventions were partially responsible for its inevitable collapse before the European cultural invasion. Similarly, in the beginning of 1950s, Cyprian Ekwensi's novels¹⁵³ had already shown a realistic critique of corruption and certain demagogues of black politicians who had been preparing themselves to take the power from the British.

Unquestionably, by the end of the 60s, the literature in English language from South, West and East of Africa had an irrefutable front position in the literary corpus rapidly growing in modern African art or literature.

In French Western Africa, the contesting voice and the political protests directed at the new leaders began to be finally heard, especially with the book called *Les Soleils de indépendances*,¹⁵⁴ published in 1968, by Ahmadou Kourouma, who had risen himself up against the French linguistic despotism. He managed to create a variation typically African. The reaction against the neo-colonial hegemony in the literary writings had been initiated in 1963 with the foundation of the "Centre de Littérature Evangélique" in Cameroun.¹⁵⁵

In the beginning of the 1970s, the creation from Dakar and Abidjan of "Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines"¹⁵⁶, helped the publication of a genre of literature more ambitious in the French language and some talented writers such as Francis Bebey or Henri Lopes won a deserved reputation, but without their work ever being published in Paris. While Tati-Loutard went back to the universal

¹⁵² See Albert Gérard, in *European-Language: Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 1986.

¹⁵³ See "Cyprian Ekwensi," in *Africana: The Encyclopaedia of the African and African American Experience*. Running Press. 2003. pp. 226–227. See also Austine Amanze Akpuda, "Cyprian Ekweni: A Memorial Tribute", on <http://www.african-writing.com/holiday/webpages/amanzeakpuda.htm> accessed in 2016

¹⁵⁴ See Ahmadou Kourouma, *Les soleils des Indépendances*, Points, 1968, 187 pages. See also <http://terangaweb.com/les-soleils-des-independances-damadou-kourouma/> accessed in 2016.

¹⁵⁵ See Cécile Bishop, "Ahmadou Kourouma ", dans Christiane Chaulet Achour, avec la collaboration de Corinne Blanchaud [sous la dir. de], *Dictionnaire des écrivains francophones classiques: Afrique subsaharienne, Caraïbe, Maghreb, Machrek, Océan Indien*, Éd. H. Champion, Paris, 2010, pp. 245 – 248.

¹⁵⁶ See Albert Gérard, "The Nouvelles Éditions Africaines", in *European – Language: Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Vol. I, edited by Albert S. Gérard, 118 – 29, Budapest: Akadémia Kiado, 1986.

origins of lyric poetry, refusing to conform his verses with the protesting framework and, as well as with the concept of Negritude, Sembéne's realism had become a source of inspiration for the novelists, whose propensity was to retake more and more the faithful descriptions of real life among Africans, who were then living in the urban areas.¹⁵⁷

Thus, given that the British Empire was bigger, richer and more popular than the French and Portuguese, the literature in English language remained and would remain more profuse, and its most eloquent producers were certainly Nigeria's, Kenya's¹⁵⁸ and South Africa's. But some other significant changes took place there.

In Nigeria, for example, the need to overcome the impact of civil war facilitated the rise of a new generation of writers no longer worried with the problems of cultural conflict, which had been the central theme of Achebe and Soyinka's generation. They did not worry about the greatness of the African past as such, which they believed had already passed and had already been overcome one way or another.

However, following in the steps of Ekwensi and Munonye, who appeared to play a role similar to that of Sembéne in the case of French, they turned their interests to the problems and uncertainties of the African people in the future, that is, to the middle class citizens. This was as well a central issue in the literature of Eastern Africa, which began to flourish as a popular literature.

In South Africa, the literary battle against apartheid was retaken by most gifted poets with a different strategy and perhaps in a more subtle way. These poets decided to stay home rather than live in exile, to write and fight the apartheid with weapons within their own countries.¹⁵⁹

Another decisive event of the 1970s was the independence of former African provinces of Portugal. This fact awoke the intellectual African elite to the existence of Lusophone literature, until then treated with a certain benign disregard, despite its great efficacy. The Lusophone African

¹⁵⁷ See Mark W DeLancey and Mark Dike DeLancey, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (3rd ed.). Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2000. See also Jim Hudgens, and Richard Trillo, *West Africa: The Rough Guide*. 3rd ed. London: Rough Guides Ltd, 1999.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example Jared Angira, born 21 November 1947, is a Kenyan poet. He has been called "the country's first truly significant poet". Angira contributed to the first (1968) issue of *Busara*, and was appointed editor-in-chief of *Busara* in 1969. He also founded the Kenya Writers' Association. Some of his works are: *Juices*, 1970; *Silent Voices*, 1972; *Soft Corals*, 1973; 'Experimental Writing', in Gurr and Calder, *Writers in East Africa*, 1974.

¹⁵⁹ See Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly (eds.), *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid, and Democracy, 1970–1995*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.

literature¹⁶⁰ began to receive the attention it already deserved. Amílcar Cabral's and Agostinho Neto's writings got deserved international attention because of what they communicated to the world: hunger and thirst for freedom. Obviously the creative literary activity happening in the countries under the Portuguese colonial rule would alter and improve the status of this language in the Sub-Saharan continent.¹⁶¹

Writing in European languages was an effective way to reach a social recognition. Wide perspectives did open before the eyes of the African writers who managed to reach a reasonable mastery of these languages.

The extraordinary growth of popular fiction in English asserted the existence of a public relatively wide that was not only composed of what Ali Mazrui ingeniously called "Afro-Saxon", or better, members of an educated and privileged middle class, whose mother tongue was now the English language. There were also average people who reached a sufficient level of linguistic competence in this foreign language and who could also appreciate, write and publish books in English.

Many authors like Sembène Ousmane and Luandino Vieira stopped writing fiction after the independence. As for Ousmane, for example, he did not stop writing because he became an ambassador, a minister or a head of state as many other African intellectuals of his time did. He simply thought that he would be closer to the average Senegalese people if he dedicated his time and talent to the cinema. He decided to shoot movies in the language of his people instead through a sophisticated variety of oral traditional art, reinforced with modern technology.

It is also worth mentioning Ngugi wa Thiong'o.¹⁶² He was certainly the best novelist ever born in Eastern Africa and a writer of an exceptional calibre once matched to the world's literary standards. At the end of the sixties, with an envied status as university professor in Nairobi and consequently with an assured reputation all over the Anglophone world and so on, Ngugi wa Thiong'o decided to

¹⁶⁰ See Russell G. Hamilton, *Voices from an Empire: a history of Afro-Portuguese Literature*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1975.

¹⁶¹ See Patrick Chabal, "Aspects of Angolan Literature: Luandino Vieira and Agostinho Neto" in *African Languages and Cultures*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1995), pp. 19-42, Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771733> .Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:38.

¹⁶² These are some of literary works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o: 1964. *Weep Not Child*. London: Heinemann; 1965. *The River Between*. London: Heinemann; 1977. *Petals of Blood*. London: Heinemann; 1980. *Devil on the Cross*. London: Heinemann; 1989. *Matigari*. Oxford: Heinemann.

write a play in his mother's language which came to be represented in a Gikuyo village not far from Nairobi. This play certainly changed his life. It criticized openly the social situation in Kenya, although with less nostalgia than in the literature written in English. He was detained and lost his academic and professional positions as a result.¹⁶³

These two cases of Ousmane and Thiong'o suggest that the problem of the survival of literature in Africa, written in European languages was much more complex and had many more implications than we could ever imagine. It is true that the newly formed African writers felt the need to denounce the excesses of their leaders and governments by using European languages. However, not all African leaders were prepared to accept criticism from creative writers such as Thiong'o.

One thing is for sure, the expansion of European languages through written literature was crucial to maintain the black continent united after gaining political independence. So, the expansion of European languages throughout the continent had a double effect.

On the one hand, it helped cement the unity of the ethnic and multilingual states present in the administrations, and counterbalance the powerful tribal forces which threaten the borders, fixed by the colonial power; on the other hand, it made African writers be known abroad by a wider community of readers. It is true that many writers who chose fiction as their most cherished genre were not satisfied by just writing to a small public of African readers. Soon, they jumped over the fence to search for bigger markets both in and out in order to produce and publish their works in European languages. This way, they helped reveal the richness of African people, cultures and art, but sadly impoverished their native languages.

Thus, having shortly reviewed the history of African literatures and ethnographies and the critical works produced about it, would we all agree with Lionel Trilling's stand, which defended that "there was no such thing as African Literature", or with George Schuyler's, which defended that there was no such thing as "Negro Art" in America, but only American Art, as mentioned in the beginning of this subchapter? Besides, would we also agree with those critics who see African literatures as simply an orature or an extension of European languages?

Absolutely not. African literature was and will continue to be an undeniable reality. It is real, historical and valuable. It is not simply an orature or an extension of European languages. Pessimistic

¹⁶³ See <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ngugi-wa-Thiongo> accessed in 2016.

critics should know that “there is, culturally speaking, no art for art's sake in Africa. Every literary work has a social function. Songs, prayers, praise and chants are placed at the service of the community. This utilitarian function of orature is absorbed by modern writers who then write exceptional texts. Rites of passage are celebrated with poems”.¹⁶⁴

The poet exhorts:

Fruits then to your lips: haste to repay
The debt of birth. Yield man-tides like the sea
And ebbing, leave a meaning on the fossil led sands.¹⁶⁵

Consequently, for Ojaide and for me, African literature has an utilitarian function: it talks about social cohesion; it defends African culture, it minds its mystical life; it addresses the issues of order, justice, morality, ethics, land and folklore; it attempts to give explanations to the concepts of universality, time and space in literary form and vision; it explores a creative use of language.¹⁶⁶ Aligned with this perspective, I think that it is what Achebe's and Carvalho's texts will expose.

Having reviewed the history of African literature in general terms, I now narrow it down to two countries: Nigeria and Angola. I will also present a critical and historical review about their main writers and ethnographers, and how they impact African literature and ethnography in general.

2. 3. 1. Nigeria: Literary Writers

It is important to situate Nigeria geographically as well as characterize to its ethnic configuration before talking about its writers and ethnographers. Geographically speaking, Nigeria is located in western Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.

Nigeria has a varied landscape. The far south is characterized by its tropical rainforest climate. In the southeast stands the Obudu Plateau. Coastal plains are found in both the southwest and the southeast. In this forest zone, mostly in the south, we find salt water swamp, also known as a mangrove swamp because of the large amount of mangroves. To the north of this, we find fresh

¹⁶⁴ Tanure Ojaide, “Modern African Literature and Cultural Identity”: *African Studies Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Dec., 1992), pp. 43-57. Published by: *African Studies Association*. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/525127>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:17.

¹⁶⁵ See Wole Soyinka. *Idanre and Other Poems*. London: Eyre Methuen, 1967. p. 25.

¹⁶⁶ Tanure Ojaide, *opus cit.*, pp. 43-57

water swamp which contains different vegetation from the salt water swamp, and in the north of that is the rain forest.

Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups, with varying languages and customs, creating a country of rich ethnic diversity. The largest ethnic groups are the Fulani/Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, making up 62% of the population, while others cover 33%; other minorities make up the remaining 5%.¹⁶⁷

As mentioned, Nigeria is a vast country with a vast multiethnic population, where about 200 different languages including dialects are spoken. The largest ethnic groups are Yoruba in the West, Igbo in the east and Hausa/Fulani in the north. The Hausa offered a considerable resistance to linguistic colonialism. With time, they began to adopt western genres like novels and formal drama or dramatization. This did not stop them from holding onto their traditional poetic forms. Unfortunately, the literary activity in their own language has little to offer to the Nigerian literary corpus and ethnography in English.

The subjects of my research are also the Igbo, found in the East. The Igbo¹⁶⁸ are extremely innovative and creative people. They are the creators of the Onitsha literature centre. They have written very little in their own local language and dialects, but much more in English. Many famous Nigerian writers are from this ethnic group: Chinua Achebe, Ekwensi (two Igbo fathers of the Nigerian novel), Elechi Amadi¹⁶⁹, Nwankwo, Tanure Ojaide, Ike, Onuora Nzekwu, Obi Egbuna, Flora Nwapa, John Munonye, and Clement Agunwa.

Amadi, Agunwa, Akpan, Munonye, Nwapa and Ekwu adopted a more serious tone in their writings and justified it by their description of harsh realities of Igbo village life. Onuora Nzekwu, born in 1928 is considered one of the most creative writers in English. His book called *A Wanda of Noble Wood* was thought to be a promising novel in Nigeria. He was a catholic school-teacher and his

¹⁶⁷ See April A Gordon, *Nigeria's Diverse Peoples: A Reference Sourcebook ABC-CLIO*. 2003 pp. 44–54.; Toyin Falola and Ann Genova, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*. Scarecrow Press. 2009, p. 328.

¹⁶⁸ I will talk about them with more detail later on in chapter 5 where I compare them with the Kuvale people.

¹⁶⁹ Born on 12 May 1934, Amadi wrote plays and novels that are generally about African village life, customs, beliefs and religious practices, as they were before the encounter with the western world. Amadi is best known for his 1966 first novel, *The Concubine*, which has been called "an outstanding work of pure fiction". Other works: *The Great Ponds* (novel) - 1969, Heinemann ; *Sunset in Biafra* (war diary) - 1973 ; *Isiburu* (play) - 1973, Heinemann ; *Pepper soup* and *The Road* (plays, combined volume) 1977; Ibadan: Onibonjo Publishers ; *Dancer of Johannesburg* (play) - 1978, Ibadan: Onibonjo Publishers; *The Slave* (novel) - 1978, Heinemann ; *Ethics in Nigerian Culture* (philosophy) - 1982, London: Heinemann; *Estrangement* (novel) - 1986, Heinemann African Writers Series ; *The Woman of Calabar* (play) - 2002, Port Harcourt: Gitelle Press ; *Speaking and Singing* (essays and poems) - 2003, University of Port Harcourt Press ; *Collected Plays* (ed. Seyi Koroye) - 2004, Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers.

writings were less fastidious and discriminatory than Achebe's, but somehow lacking Achebe's mastery of English and of novelistic techniques.

Obi Egbuna is best known for his plays, works such as *Wind Versus Polygamy* (his only novel), *The Anthill* (1965) and collection of short stories. He invents a tightly-knit plot that stresses comedy and suspense. His works are a humorous description of polygamous Igbo.

Flora Nwap, born in 1931, is considered the first novelist woman in Nigeria. She provided a feminine view of Igbo village life. Works such as *Efuru* (1966) *Idu* (1970) seems to dominate the first half-dozen years of Igbo fiction of English.

Unlike several of the Igbo writers who had emerged in the mid-sixties, Munonye did not lose his inspiration as a novelist after the defeat of Biafra. Munonye published writings such as *A Wreath for the Maidens* (1973), *A Dancer of Fortune* (1974), *Bridge of wedding* (1978).

The Yoruba, on the other hand, are the most complex case. Like the Hausas, they developed a considerable corpus of literature in their own language and dialects. Despite that, like the Igbo, they gave great contribution to the Nigerian literature in English. More than any other ethnic group in Nigeria, they managed to adapt the modern literary forms into the various expressions of their traditional myths, fairy tales and folklores. The most talented writer of Yoruba ethnic group is certainly Wole Soyinka.¹⁷⁰ And he is probably the most gifted Sub-Saharan African writer. By looking at his achievements as an academic, the Nigerian and the African should humbly be proud of him and his works.

Other also important writer of this golden generation is Zainab Alkali,¹⁷¹ (born in 1950 at Tura-Wazila in Borno State, is a Nigerian novelist, poet, short story writer). She is the first woman to be a

¹⁷⁰ It is said that in 2011, the African Heritage Research Library and Cultural Centre built a writers' enclave in his honour. It is located in Adeyipo Village, Lagelu Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. This place includes a Writer-in-Residence Program that enables writers to stay for a period of two, three or six months, engaging in serious creative writing; In 1973, Soyinka received his Honorary PhD at the University of Leeds; 1973 –74: He was appointed overseas Fellow, Churchill College, Cambridge; 1983: Elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In 1983 he won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, United States; 1986: Nobel Prize for Literature; 1986 Agip Prize for Literature; 1986 Commander of the Federal Republic, CFR.; 1990: Benson Medal from Royal Society of Literature; 1993: Honorary doctorate, Harvard University; 2005: Honorary doctorate degree, Princeton University; 2005: Conferred with the chieftaincy title of Akinlatun of Egbaland by the Alake, Oba of his Egba clan of Yoruba land. He was made a tribal aristocrat with the right to use the Yoruba title Oloye; 2009: Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award.

¹⁷¹ Her main works are: *The Stillborn*, Lagos: Longman, 1984. Dearborn Financial Publishing, 1988; London: Longman, 1989. Addison-Isley Publishers, 1990; Longman International Education, 1995; *The Virtuous Woman*, Longman Nigeria, 1987; *Coblbs & Other Stories*, Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1997; *The Descendants*, Tamaza, 2005; Zaynab Alkali, Al Imfeld (eds.), *Vultures in the Air: voices from Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan-Kaduna-Lagos: Spectrum Books, 1995.

novelist in the Northern Nigeria. Additionally, Abiola Irele¹⁷². He is called the doyen of Africanist literary scholars worldwide. He published extensively as well.

Some other Nigerian writers and authors who were also determinant for the evolution of Nigerian literature have been simply forgotten. The list is long. I think that they were not less important. To name just a few, writers such as Christopher Okigbo¹⁷³, Niyi Osundare (prolific poet, dramatist and literary critic, with so many published works), Ola Rotimi (well known dramatist), and Zulu Sofola (born in 1935 and dead in 1995) should be revisited. Zulu Sofola, for instance, was the first published female Nigerian playwright and dramatist. She was also a university teacher and became the first female Professor of Theatre Arts in Africa. Unfortunately, these writers have not had the attention they deserve in the Nigerian literary canon and are probably not even known by young people.

This is evidence that the Nigerian literary canon is rich and diversified. Its great works and writers must deserve some space in the “international canon” as well. It makes sense then to continue to defend that a canon should not be seen as a close-ended list of books or some kind of sacred repository in which new outstanding literary books have no opportunity to be included, but only those considered as canonized by the West.

Nowadays, critically acclaimed writers of a younger generation, to mention just a few, are certainly Chris Abani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Sefi Atta, Helon Habila, Helen Oyeyemi, Nnedi Okorafor, Kachi A. Ozumba, Sarah Ladipo Manyika, and Chika Unigwe.

Abani (or Chris Abani, born in 1966) is part of a new generation of Nigerian writers working to convey to an English-speaking audience the experience of those born and raised in Nigeria. He published his first novel, *Masters of the Board* (1985) at the age of sixteen. The plot was a political thriller and it was an allegory of a coup that was carried out in Nigeria just before it was written. As a result, he was imprisoned for 6 months on suspicion of participating in an attempt to overthrow

¹⁷² Abiola published several writings among which are: *The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora*, Oxford University Press (paperback 2001); *The African Experience in Literature and Ideology*, Indiana University Press (reprint 1990); Joint editor with Simon Gikandi of *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, Cambridge University Press (2004); “Négritude: Literature and ideology” in *The African Philosophy Reader*.

¹⁷³ Christopher Ifekandu Okigbo (1930 – 1967) was a Nigerian poet who died fighting for the independence of Biafra. He is today widely acknowledged as the outstanding postcolonial English-language African poet and one of the major modernist writers of the twentieth century.

the government. He continued to write after his release from jail, but was imprisoned again for one year after the publication of his novel *Sirocco* (1987).¹⁷⁴ This might have killed his flair for literature.

Also, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (born in 1977), Igbo, is commonly called one of “the most prominent” young African writers. She also writes critical works. She is probably one of the most interesting young writers found among young Anglophone authors. She is attracting a new generation of readers to African literature, especially youth. Adichie began to write poems in 1997 (*Decisions*) and a play (*For Love of Biafra*) in 1998. Her short story “You in America” was accepted in 2002 for the Caine Prize. Again, in 2003, her story “That Harmattan Morning” became a winner of the BBC Short Story Awards, winning as well the O. Henry prize for “The American Embassy”.

Her novels are *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2004), *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), *Americanah* (2013). So a young giant such as this cannot be ignored when discussing about Nigerian literature.

Helon Habila Ngalabak (born in 1967) is a novelist and a poet. He was a lecturer and journalist in Nigeria before settling in England. His first novel was *Waiting for an Angel*, published in 2002. The Caine Prize in 2001 can also be found in his collection. Apart from it, he co-edited the British Council's anthology, *New Writing 14*. Among his other novels, we also find *Measuring Time*, published in 2007, *Oil on Water*, published in 2011 and one anthology, *The Granta Book of the African Short Story* in 2011.

Nnedi Okorafor cannot be forgotten as well. She writes science fiction, and fiction. Her novels and stories reflect both her African and American life. Okorafor holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Illinois, Chicago. Apart from it, she is a professor of creative writing at Chicago State University.

She wrote *Who Fears Death*, *The Shadow Speaker* and *Zahrah the Windseeker*. *Zahrah* was a winner of the Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ His other works including Novels are *The Virgin of Flames* (Penguin, 2007); *GraceLand* (FSG, 2004/Picador 2005); *Masters of the Board* (Delta, 1985). Novellas: *Becoming Abigail* (Akashic Books, 2006); *Song For Night* (Akashic Books, 2007); Poetry: *Sanctificum* (Copper Canyon Press, 2010); *Hands Washing Water* (Copper Canyon Press, 2006); *Dog Woman* (Red Hen Press, 2004); *Daphne's Lot* (Red Hen Press, 2003); *Kalakuta Republic* (Saqi, 2001).

¹⁷⁵ See also Ivor W. Hartmann, ed., *AfroSF: Science Fiction by African Writers*. StoryTime.ASIN B00AEUH112, 2012. She was also shortlisted for the 2005 Carl Brandon Parallax and Kindred Awards and a finalist for the Garden State Teen Book Award and the Golden Duck Award. *The Shadow Speaker* was a winner of the Carl Brandon Parallax Award, a Booksense Pick for Winter 2007/2008, a Tiptree Honor Book, was a finalist for the Essence Magazine Literary Award, the Andre Norton Award and the Golden Duck Award and an NAACP Image Award nominee. *Who Fears Death* won the 2011 World

Kachi A. Ozumba is a novelist and short story writer. He is the author of *The Shadow of a Smile* (2009). Ozumba is also a former student in the University of Ibadan.

Sarah Ladipo Manyika (born in 1968) is an Anglo-Nigerian writer. She was raised in Nigeria and has also lived in Kenya, France and England. Her writing includes essays, academic papers, book reviews and short stories. Sarah's literary works include, *In Dependence*, 2008 and *Mr Wonder* which appeared in 2008.

Chika Unigwe was born in Enugu, Nigeria and holds a PhD in Literature from the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. Her literary works include, *De Feniks*, *Moving Worlds*, *Per Contra*, *Voices of the University of Wisconsin* and *Okike*, *Fata Morgana*, and *On Black Sisters' Street* (2009). Chika writes in English and Dutch. She has also published short fiction in several anthologies, journals and magazines, including *Wasafiri*.

Looking at this diversified literary richness one should not wonder why Nigeria has stood first in the world of modern African Literature. It is not so much that all the best literary and ethnographic writings have been produced there. But, surely, the fact that when Nigeria produces, it produces in number and quality and, such a quality normally manages to cross their geographic borders over and reach other consuming centres outside it as a result.

Chinua Achebe and his fellows in the Nigerian literature seem to have set the pace and the subsequent generations have faithfully been following in their footsteps. Currently, Nigeria can be considered as the mirror of modern African literature. This is because Nigeria has been the only consistent country in Africa in terms of outstanding literary productions culturally inspired. In most of other African countries, apart from Nigeria their literary and ethnographic productions slowed after gaining their political independences from Europe. There are signs that literary and ethnographic productions are on the increase in some of these African countries.

Nevertheless, Nigeria has not slowed literary production even after its political independence. On the contrary, literary production has increased. New generations kept the torch lit and were able to bring about works which have enriched the African and world literatures.

Fantasy Award for Best Novel, was a 2011 Tiptree Honor Book and was nominated for the 2010 Nebula Award. Okorafor's children's book *Long Juju Man* the 2007 – 08 winner of the Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa. Her short stories have been published in anthologies and magazines, including *Dark Matter II*, *Strange Horizons*, *Moondance* magazine, and *Writers of the Future* Volume XVIII.

2. 3. 2. Angola: Literary Writers and Ethnographers

Geographically speaking, Angola is bordered by Namibia to the south, Zambia to the east, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north-east, and the South Atlantic Ocean to the West. The enclave of Cabinda also borders the Republic of the Congo to the north.

Angola's population is about 25, 7 million people. It is composed of Ovimbundu (language Umbundu) 22, 96%, Kikongo 8, 24%, Ambundu (language Kimbundu) 7, 82%, Tchokwe 6, 54% , Nganguela 3, 11%, Kwanhama 2, 26%, Muhumbi 2, 12%, Fiote 2, 39%. There are also foreigners who chose Angola as their home.¹⁷⁶

Culturally speaking, the languages in Angola are those originally spoken by the different ethnic groups plus Portuguese due to the country being a former Portuguese colony. The indigenous languages with the largest usage are Umbundu, Kimbundu, and Kikongo, in that order. Portuguese is the official language of the country and, for many youngsters, it has become their mother tongue since they are not able to speak any of these indigenous languages.

Portuguese is spoken in all social circumstances by about 71, 15% of the population¹⁷⁷: family, school, churches and during diplomatic contacts, since it is politically determined by the Angolan Constitution as the official language of Angola. This way, it has played a unifying role in a country with so much cultural diversity. In this sense, the Portuguese civilizational and unifying roles in Angola have successfully reached their end. It is spoken everywhere and by many people of all social strata. The traces of Portuguese influence in Angola are visible wherever we turn to, not only on society as a whole, but also on the local indigenous languages, on the cities, on the various ethnic groups and, especially, on the public institutions.

By considering these figures, I could be tempted to say that the Angolan have probably mastered more the official language than any other people elsewhere in Africa, given that this certainly applies to its use in everyday life. Moreover, and above all, I think the proportion of native Angolans, who speak the language of the former colonizer, which was turned official after

¹⁷⁶ See www.angonoticias.com/Artigos/item/50225/mais-de-sete-milhoes-de-angolanos-falam-linguas-nacionais accessed in 2017.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

independence by the former president Agostinho Neto, is no doubt considerable. In urban areas is about 85% and in the rural ones is 49%.¹⁷⁸

In fact, literary criticism on Lusophone African narratives has been profuse in recent years due to significant findings and increases in the number of literary works, especially in Angola.

Efforts have been made to develop Angolan literature and make it accessible to all people by means of a strategy of re-editions of some of its literary classics. In 2013, for example, a collection of eleven literary works was reedited by the “Programa de Educação Patriótica e de Promoção Nacional e Internacional da Marca Angola” (a Program of Patriotic Education and of National and International Promotion of the Angola Brand) as part of this strategy. This collection received the name of “The Eleven Classics”, which for some critics was a too narrowed selection since it did not truly represent the vast universe of Angolan literature and ethnography. It was justified that it was the first re-edition of many more to come out until the rightful literary representativeness of Angolan literature was completed.

Here are “The Eleven Classics”: *Espontaneidades da Minha Alma*, by José da Silva Maia Ferreira, *Nga Muturi*, by Alfredo Troni, *Delírios* by Cordeiro da Mata, *O Segredo da Morta*, by António de Assis Júnior, *Sobreviver em Tarrafal de Santiago*, by António Jacinto, *Sagrada Esperança*, by Agostinho Neto, *Trajectória Obliterada*, by João Maimona, *Mayombe*, by Pepetela, *Mestre Tamoda e outros Contos*, by Uanhenga Xitu, *Quem me dera ser Onda*, by Manuel Rui, *Luuanda*, by Luandino Vieira.

At first glance, it appears that these re-editions hide a political motivation and not a literary one. For example, the reason why Viriato da Cruz, Castro Soromenho, Carlos Estermann¹⁷⁹ and others were not included in “The Classics” still remains unconvincingly justified by the mentors of the same program. Time will prove me wrong if second political intentions did not lurk behind this program, recently set up. Gladly, we have witnessed more re-editions of other valuable Angolan literary writers as it has been promised. But still a too narrow-minded selection. My short analytical review will focus on some of these writers from a vast list of many more waiting to be discovered and studied.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ His *Etnografia do Sudoeste de Angola: os povos não-bantos e o grupo étnico dos Ambós* is a great source of information about the southern people of Angola. It is considered one of the first ethnographic attempts to record the history and culture of these people. Ruy de Carvalho used this material as a starting point for his research among the Kuvale people.

Phillis Peres's *Transculturation and Resistance in Lusophone Africa*; Ana Martinho's *The Protean Web: Literature and Ethnography in Lusophone* and her *Cânones Literários e Educação: os Casos Angolano e Moçambicano*; Patrick Chabal's "Aspect of Angolan Literature: Luandinho Vieira and Agostinho Neto" article, Carlos Erverdosa's *Roteiro da Literatura Angolana*; Inocência Mata's *A Literatura Africana e a Crítica Pós-Colonial: Reconversões* and, of course, Albert Gérard's *European-language writing in Sub-Saharan Africa* will be important to find the answers to the following questions: what is Angolan literature and ethnography? When and how did they emerge? Who have been their main mentors? What are the prospects for their future?

It is commonly held that Angolan literature had its inception in the publication of *Esportaneidade da Minha Alma – Às Senhoras africanas*¹⁸⁰, by José da Silva Maia Ferreira in 1849, the first ever printed literary work on the Lusophone Africa grounds. Ana Martinho referred to that by saying that

Se a literatura angolana começou em 1849, com a publicação de *Esportaneidades das minha alma*, ou em 1950, com *Mensagem*, talvez não seja uma questão tão importante como o saber-se em que momentos se acompanhou ou se contrariou a tradição africana oral e até que ponto as diferentes gerações literárias se sucedem de modo integrado ou verdadeiramente por efeito de rupturas acentuadas.¹⁸¹

Ferreira's poetry echoes another book published by Maia's friend João d'Aboim a year earlier, entitled *Livro da Minha Alma*. It seems to be spontaneous and with no premeditated arrangements and not even chronological. It is somehow nostalgic and intimate. Its appreciation of the African women and culture.

The second major publication came out in 1882, by Alfredo Troni, a book entitled *Nga Muturi*. Alfredo Troni was a well-known lawyer, born and educated in Portugal. He founded and managed the *Jornal de Loanda*, in 1878, the *Mukuarimi* (a word in Kimbundu meaning speaker, gossip, talkative), in 188(8)? and the *Conselhos de Leste*, in 1891. Alfredo Troni fought for the abolition of slavery of black people. Because of this, he had many white enemies, including members of the local

¹⁸⁰But it looks strange to notice that it was the official Government Press, recently established in Luanda which published *Esportaneidades da Minha Alma*. Works also belonging to the author:

¹⁸¹ Ana Maria Mão-de-Ferro Martinho, *Cânones Literários e Educação: os Casos Angolano e Moçambicano*, Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, 2001, p. 255.

Government, who even decided to cancel his political participation in the local elections held at that time.

Nga Muturi is a story of a black woman who marries a rich white man, but finds herself caught in the midst of a conflict between her African customs and her husband's, between tradition and modernity. Her husband dies and she inherits his wealth which becomes a source of many conflicts for her. *Nga Muturi* was even used as a plot of a soap opera by the local Angolan television and has been compared to the successful Brazilian soap opera 'Chica da Silva', which depicts this marital relationship between black ex-slaves and colonial masters in Brazil in the eighteenth century.

The third book is *Delírios*, written by Cordeiro da Matta, certainly one of most important books of the Angolan literature since it is clearly an expression of Angolan identity. It is a composition of poems exploring and reporting various situations about African reality: race, slavery, illiteracy, unemployment, prostitution etc. Cordeiro values local cultures and languages. This is revealed in some of his poems, where he attempted to exercise some bilinguism, that is, of Portuguese and Kimbundu.¹⁸²

Worth mentioning is Héli Chatelain, one of the mentors of the movement for the creation of the Angolan Literature written in Kimbundu, who wrote in a letter in 1894, praising Cordeiro da Matta, that "the future of native Angolan literature in Kimbundu only nine years ago (in 1885, when this Swiss missionary arrived at Angola) so much derided and opposed, is now practically assured, the negro poet of the Cuanza river, has abandoned the Portuguese muse in order to consecrate his talents to the nascent national literature."¹⁸³ His bilinguism is noticed for the first time in the poem Kícôla (1877), as an imitation of one of the verses of João E. da C. Toulson, who managed to publish his Poem in the newspaper *O Futuro de Angola*.

Toulson was in reality the pioneer of bilinguism in the Angolan literature. At that time, Kimbundu was considered a language of social prestige. Some African elites and colonial masters based there spoke this language. The colonial administration and even the businesspeople used it with a certain level of linguistic competence. For Cordeiro da Matta, Portuguese, considered as a language of civilization, and Kimbundu, as a language of culture, had to live together and never mix

¹⁸² For instance, the poem is "Nguibanga-kiê", meaning "what shall I do?", in *Delírios*, p. 84-85. His other works: *Philosophia Popular em Provérbios Angolenses* (1891), which is a research on oral literature and philosophy; *Ensaio de Dicionário KimbundoPortuguez* (1893).

¹⁸³ See the introductory notes found in *Delírios*, Luanda: União dos Escritores Angolanos, 2013, p. 27.

each other. In his opinion, the Angolans should manage to have sufficient linguistic competence of both languages but never mix them.

Furthermore, for Patrick Chabal, the “Modern Angolan literature has its roots in the search for Angolanidade (Angolan identity), that is the movement for cultural autonomy which young writers initiated in the late forties and early fifties”. He recognizes nevertheless that “almost uniquely in Africa, Angola had a tradition of literature written in the Portuguese language going back to the mid-nineteenth century. It was not, however, until a century later that the awareness of the cultural specificities of the colony and a growing opposition to Portuguese colonial rule combined to produce this new, and genuinely modern, Angolan literature.”¹⁸⁴

Ana Martinho could not agree with him more. But for her, agreeing equally with what Carlos Ervedosa and Rita Chaves wrote, the novel *O Segredo da morta – Romances de costumes angolense*, written by António de Assis Júnior (1878 – 1960), “is the main literary work of this period and the one that shows the evidence of cultural detachment from Portuguese dominant values.”¹⁸⁵ For her and Ervedosa it would be “particularly important to stress the socio-cultural pattern that the Portuguese presence in Luanda and Dondo generated in the late 19th century, implying a commercial development that had consequences in the intellectual activity and growth that occurred as of the establishment of the republican regime after 1910.”¹⁸⁶

Consequently, we can say that Angolan literature, based on these historical and literary evidences, is a tradition of literature written in Portuguese and local native languages. It began in the 19th century and reached a certain degree of maturity in the 1940s and 1950s. Nonetheless, it is characterized by a strong sense of “awareness of cultural specificities and a growing opposition to the Portuguese colonial rule”, which has surely been restored in postcolonial period (a reflection and self-reflection on the experiences of hard won independence). This sense of “awareness of cultural specificities and a growing opposition to the Portuguese colonial rule”¹⁸⁷ gave birth to a generation

¹⁸⁴ See Patrick Chabal, “Aspects of Angolan Literature: Luandino Vieira and Agostinho Neto” in *African Languages and Cultures*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1995). Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771733>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:38.

¹⁸⁵ Ana Maria Martinho Gale, *The Protean Web: Literature and Ethnography in Lusophone Africa*, Lisboa: Edições Calibri, 2011, p. 49

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 49.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 49.

of writers who decided to denounce the abuses of the colonial regime, using a sheet of paper and a pen.

Patrick Chabal's emphasis on the concept of Angolanidade (Angolan identity) as the main source of literary inspiration for the young revolutionary writers is probably part of the truth. If Angolanidade was something like Negritude, certainly Angolan literature would have ended immediately after the ideals of independence were achieved. I think it was deeper than that.

Reading *The Protean Web*, one gets the impression that most critics of Angolan literature are trying to correct fixed views which have seen modern Angolan literature as something which seriously began with authors like Luandino Vieira, Agostinho Neto or Manuel Rui. In her work, Ana Martinho also reminded us of the existence of female texts produced during the Portuguese colonial rule for public awareness. Although these texts have not been given a deserved attention, they can certainly inspire the Angolan contemporary literary criticism and show new paths to the kind of literary criticism carried out so far in Angola and elsewhere in Africa. As Ana Martinho puts it:

What these particular narratives have in common with other literary productions and with journalistic texts either written before or after the independences (in 1975), is the very resilient interest for cultural reading, translation and re-inscription... We regard most of the texts these authors wrote as impressionist testimonies organized around the modalization of expatriation (s). Typically addressing the local through a cosmopolitan lens, the ultimate aspiration for them was to report the mysteries of African life and of its exotic rituals to the world...In fact, in most cases these men and women travelled to Africa directly from their hometown or village. Often, they had never been elsewhere... Many of such works are still relevant today since they are testimonies of information partially lost. They also contribute to the recovery of colonial studies and of history in general. The other side of textual production under these conditions is present in newspapers, magazines and other means of cultural circulation... Women authored many of these narratives. The reasons for this may rely on different hypotheses: their socio-cultural origin, the history of emigration of their families, and the urge of writing. Apparently, they all felt they had something to voice, some contribution to give back to the community about their experience in Africa."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 36 – 37.

This analysis raises awareness of these texts authored by women and reevaluates current political prejudices towards them. The themes contained in them may reframe the actual views about the portrait of women's role in the African socio-cultural strata, the tensions between the urban European living in Africa and the outskirts of African cities, something observed when reading authors such as Luandino Vieira and Uanhenga Xitu, although their works had been mostly produced to denounce injustices perpetrated by the colonial regime. From the perspective of someone who carried strong reservations about the colonial rule, to see the other side of textual production would have been a huge challenge.

Certainly, some of these personal biases were concerned with the type of political agenda set up by these young African writers: mainly to overthrow the colonial regime at all cost. Furthermore, the Angolan national history is confusedly told to young generations. The history told is often marked with political and ideological agendas. Unfortunately, this makes it difficult for young generations to know the whole truth about the untold textual productions carried out before the independence. It is becoming obviously certain that Angolan literature should be redefined.

Effectively, my definition of Angolan literature takes seriously the policy of literary inclusion of all relevant textual productions, banned or lost during the colonial period or after independence, which will no doubt enrich the Angolan Literary corpus. Truth is something one cannot hide.

Having said this, another question can certainly be addressed. Who are the mentors of modern Angolan literature? It is a difficult question to answer, given that many literary and historical critics take different stands. This is due to the fact that from the beginning, there has been a dual strand in Angolan literature. One was the desire to write a literature which was specifically Angolan, founded in the Angolan oral tradition. In this strand you have authors like Assis Júnior, Óscar Ribas, Uanhenga Xitu, Castro Soromenho, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, who get their themes mainly from Angolan oral traditions. In this sense, one could say that their work is ethnographic, because they collect stories, fairy tales, customs, and rituals to transform them into fictional writings to either record or reconstruct some of them.¹⁸⁹

The other strand was the need of producing a literature which would be relevant to the anti-colonial ambition of these Angolan writers. Here, you find writers like Luandino Vieira, Manuel Rui,

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Pepetela, Agostinho Neto, António Jacinto, Viriato da Cruz, Mário Pinto de Andrade¹⁹⁰ and others that will be mentioned later. But I would like here to discuss briefly the work of some seminal Angolan writers who represent fully these two strands of Angolanidade, not forgetting that the analysis of Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* will complete these two stands on Angolanidade. Let me start first with Luandino Vieira, then I will bring in the discussion some other writers not less important and finally Agostinho Neto. For Patrick Chabal,

Luandino Vieira, by common consent the most gifted of Angola's prose writers before independence, embarked on the deliberate creation of a modern written Angolan literature to reflect the oral and linguistic culture of the capital city, Luanda. Agostinho Neto, Angola's nationalist leader and foremost politician until his death, was for his part committed to the writing of an Angolan poetry to sustain the quest for cultural and, ultimately, political independence.¹⁹¹

Patrick Chabal defends that these two authors can be considered as pillars of "Angolanidade". His biographical notes on Vieira describe him as someone of humble origins, born in the Portuguese city of Lagoa de Furadoura. His full name was José Vieira Mateus da Graça. He received the name Luandino Vieira as his "nom de plume". Vieira's parents were forced to emigrate from Portugal to Angola. There, they settled in one of the Musseques (poor suburban quarters) of Luanda. It is there that Luandino Vieira developed his literary art. In 1957, he published his book of short stories, entitled *A Cidade e a Infância* (Childhood and the City).

This book was immediately prohibited for public circulation, because it was thought dangerous to the colonial ideology implanted there. But, paradoxically, it got great reception in Portugal after being published three years later by the *Casa dos Estudantes do Império* (a place destined to students from Portuguese colonies). This book sets Luandino's literary journey to his magnitude.

Although originally from Portugal, Luandino has always considered himself as an Angolan, and he certainly is. His literary works and his life proved it to the full. Vieira's heart was for Angola. One could say that he had been wrongly born in Portugal. Apart from *Cidade e a Infância*, he also wrote a

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Patrick Chabal, "Aspects of Angolan Literature: Luandino Vieira and Agostinho Neto" in *African Languages and Cultures*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1995). Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771733>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:38, p. 19.

collection of stories under the title *Luuanda*, and was awarded the prestigious literary prize, 'Grande Prémio da Novelística', by the much respected Society of Portuguese Writers in 1964. The fact is that the Portuguese government did not like that Luandino Vieira should be awarded this prize and decided to abolish the Society of Portuguese Writers. As it was still noticed by Chabal,

The regime's anger was not just caused by the embarrassment of the Prize being awarded to a white Portuguese jailed for political reasons, it was primarily because *Luuanda*, despite its apparent simplicity, was highly subversive in both literary and cultural terms. At a time when the nationalists in Portuguese Africa had begun challenging the Portuguese by force of arms (anti-colonial wars were fought in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea), here was a (white) Angolan writer whose book broke with every canon of colonial literature.¹⁹²

What was in the book that would cause so much anger? Why was it considered to have broken the canon of colonial literature? As it was noticed by Ana Martinho,

Under Portuguese colonization in Africa, textual production and cultural writing (...) had to endure many restrictions and there was a strict official control of the editorial space. A considerable number of institutions were active in Portugal and in the colonies and some were focused on research activities in Africa and Asia.¹⁹³

Thus a book like *Luuanda*, containing stories about the lives of the most ordinary (black, white and *mestiços*) inhabitants of the musseques, telling the stories of ordinary events, written from the perspective of someone 'telling a story' and therefore unquestionably oral, in the way Africans do in the "jango", people surrounding the lit logs in a moony light, would certainly drive the regime crazy.

From a literary point of view, "the language used is one which both reflects that used by the people of the musseque and at the same time stands as genuinely new 'Angolan' language incorporating not just the words but some of the grammatical and syntactical structures of the African language spoken around Luanda."¹⁹⁴

The other books written by Vieira are *No Antigamente na Vida* and *João Vêncio: seus Amores*. In these two books, Luandino's "literary quest reaches its pinnacle", as Chabal would say: "where he

¹⁹² Ibid, p 21.

¹⁹³ Op. Cit, p. 32.

¹⁹⁴ Patrick Chabal, "Aspects of Angolan Literature: Luandino Vieira and Agostinho Neto" in *African Languages and Cultures*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1995). Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771733>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:38, p. 21.

creates an absolutely original Angolan literary language to reflect the universe of memory by combining stream of consciousness and the merging of reality with fantasy”¹⁹⁵ Chabal continues. This certainly means that Luandino blends the context and the text, where the language used reflects the world in which his characters live and move. This is an authentic ethnography. Literature and ethnography come together to produce a sensational imagery, fiction. More recently he published *Papéis da Prisão: Apontamentos, diário, correspondência (1962-1971)*, (2015). But he does not call it a book as such, but his diary.¹⁹⁶

The other Angolan writer deserving also great attention is Domingos Van-Dúnem. Born in 1925. His work *Dibundu*, reflects life experiences in the urban cities of Angola. There is an association of the cities and of their outskirts. Nonetheless, distance and strangeness between these two worlds are clearly identified. Misery is denounced in the outskirts, but does not match with what Luandino Vieira has done with great artistic brilliance in *Luuanda*. His literary works include: *Uma História Singular* (1975); *Milonga* (1985); *Kuluka* (1988); *O Panflecto* (1988).

Manuel Rui Alves Monteiro cannot be left out of the list of key influencing writers to the Angolan literary corpus. Born in Huambo (1941), best known as Manuel Rui,¹⁹⁷ he is a great poet, novelist and dramatist. Many of his works contain irony, comedy and humour about what happened immediately after independence. Having got his degree in law in 1969, Manuel Rui probably used it less than literature. He is most known for his literary writings, having even become one of the founding members of União dos Escritores Angolanos. His best works¹⁹⁸ include *Sim Camarada*,

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 21.

¹⁹⁶ See www.publico.pt/2015/11/24/culturaipsilon/noticia/jose-luandino-vieira-isto-nao-e-um-livro-sao-12-anos-de-vida-1715501

¹⁹⁷ See Phillis Reisman Butler. “Manuel Rui's *Sim Camarada*! Interpolation and the Transformation of Narrative Discourse” in *Callaloo*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Spring, 1991). Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2931625> .Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:43.

¹⁹⁸ Here are his other literary Works: Prose: Manuel Rui. *Regresso Adiado Lisboa*. [S.l.: s.n.], 1973. (Included: *Mulato de Sangue Azul*, *O Aquário*, *Com ou Sem Pensão*, *Em Tempo de Guerra não se Limpam Armas e O Churrasco*); *A Caixa*. Luanda: Conselho Nacional de Cultura, 1977; *Cinco Dias depois da Independência*. Luanda: UEA, 1979. (Published originally in the book *Sim Camarada*! it was separately edited, in the format of pocket book, in the collection 2K of the Union of Angolan writers); *Memória de Mar*. Luanda: UEA, 1980; *Quem me dera ser Onda*. Lisboa: Edições Cotovia, 1982; *Crónica de um Mujimbo*. Luanda: UEA, 1989; *Um Morto & Os Vivos*. Lisboa: Edições Cotovia, 1993. (Adapted for the series O “Comba” of the Public Television of Angola); *Rio Seco*. Lisboa: Edições Cotovia, 1997; *Da Palma da Mão*. Lisboa: Cotovia, 1998; *Saxofone e Metáfora: Estórias*. Lisboa: Cotovia, 2001. *Um Anel na Areia*. Luanda: Nzila, 2002; Manuel Rui. *Nos Brilhos*. Luanda: Instituto Nacional das Indústrias Culturais, 2002; *Maninha: Crónicas*. Luanda: Nzila, 2002; *Conchas e Búzios*. Luanda: Nzila, 2003; *O Manequim e o Piano*. Luanda: UEA, 2005; *Estórias de Conversa*. Luanda: Nzila, 2006; *A Casa do Rio*. Luanda: Nzila, 2007; *Janela de Sónia*. Luanda: UEA, 2009. *A Trança*, Luanda: Mayamba, 2014.

(1977): the first fiction book published after the independence), *Quem me dera ser onda* and *Meninos do Huambo*. Ana Martinho, commenting on his works, has considered, referring to the work *Sim Camarada*,

The narrator who plays the role of the ethnographer; the one who is in the field and who documents the whole set of circumstances that voice the multiple subjects of the revolution; the young guerrilla, the woman who asks questions about the political moment, the commander, the Angolans and the Portuguese circulation between Africa and Europe. I find in his texts, especially in *Sim Camarada*, an historical anticipation and a portrait of the multiple displacements that would shape Portugal and Angola as postcolonizer-ed spaces.¹⁹⁹

Not least influential is Agostinho André Mendes de Carvalho, best known as Uanhenga Xitu, his Kimbundu name; he was born in Icolo e Bengo, 1924 and died recently in 2014. Uanhenga Xitu is one of the most charismatic and original Angolan writers. In the last years, some scientific works have been done on his literary legacy, not only in Angola but also in other countries.

Uanhenga Xitu is an eminent popular story teller. His narrative is not confined into the strictness of literary standards, given that his primary objective is to establish a semiotic link with people, his source of inspiration. His life at the village transformed him into man full of compassion, solidarity and interested in the human sufferings.

In one of his interviews, he is believed to have said that what worried him too much was the social situation of the Angolan people. In 2006, he was granted the “Prémio de Cultura e Arte” in the category of Literature due to the quality of his literary work, which was a great surprise for him. Certainly, he is among the best authors in Angolan literary history. Some of his best works include: *Mestre Tamoda*; *Maka na Sanzala*; *Os Discursos do Mestre Tamoda*. In his works, as was mentioned by Ana Martinho, “I see a combination of multiple narrative voices and testimonial fictional that mimic to a large extent «participant observation»”.²⁰⁰

Arnaldo Santos is also an Angolan writer, born in Luanda in 1935. Between 1959 and 1960 he lived in Portugal and there he met Amílcar Cabral, Castro Soromenho, Mário Pinto de Andrade and

¹⁹⁹ Ana Martinho, *The Protean Web...* p. 57.

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 54.

other Marxist authors. They certainly influenced him and his works. He published different writings among which we find poetry.²⁰¹

Comments from some literary critics qualify him as an intellectual who “writes about the uncomfortable place of cultural mediation, voicing both sides and hoping to support the most marginal voices. This discomfort is very close to what we see happening in most systems going through political transitions and provides the grounds for a powerful elite to affirm itself and to establish dominance”²⁰²

Fernando de Castro Soromenho, born in Mozambique and naturalized Portuguese, son of Portuguese parents, was a journalist, fictionist and ethnographer. He is considered by the Portuguese literary critics as a writer belonging to Portuguese neo-realist movement and by the Angolan literary critics as one of the most brilliant literary icons of the Angolan literature. Castro Soromenho, the name for which he is best known, went to Angola when he was only one year old. After his studies in Portugal, he went to work for the Angolan Diamond company, a company he denounced for its abuses against black workers. Castro Soromenho’s works²⁰³ should be determinant in studying part of the Angolan ethnography. He certainly belongs to the Angolan literary imaginary.

Mário Coelho Pinto de Andrade, born in Golungo Alto, 1928, best known for Mario Pinto de Andrade, was an MPLA political activist, and its president and a literary critic. He studied philology in Lisbon. He cofounded the African Study Centre in Portugal, 1951. In 1954, he was forced to go to the exile in Paris, where he met Léopold Senghor cofounder of the Négritude movement. Mário Pinto de Andrade was an essayist and poet. Among other works, he published the *Antologia da Poesia Negra de Expressão Portuguesa* (1958); *La Poésie Africaine d'Expression Portugaise* (1969); *Amilcar Cabral: Essai de Biographie Politique* (1980); *As Origens do Nacionalismo Africano* (1997).

²⁰¹ Here are some of these writings: *Fuga* (1960) *Poemas no Tempo* (1977) *Nova Memória da Terra e dos Homens* (1987); Stories and Novellas: *Quinaxixe* (1965); *Prosas* (1977); *Kinaxixe e Outras Prosas*; *Na Mbanza do Miranda* (1985); *Cesto de Katandu e outros contos* (1986); *A Boneca de Quilengues* (1991). Chronicle: *Tempo do Munhungo* (1968). Novel: *A Casa Velha das Margens* (1999).

²⁰² Ana Martinho, *The Protean Web*, p. 53.

²⁰³ *Lendas negras* (stories) (1936); *Nhari: o drama da gente negra* (stories and soap opera) (1938); *Imagens da cidade de S. Paulo de Luanda* (1939); *Noite de angústia* (novel) (1939); *Homens sem caminho* (novel) (1941); *Sertanejos de Angola* (history) (1943); *A aventura e a morte no sertão: Silva Pôrto e a viagem de Angola a Moçambique* (history) (1943); *Rajada e outras histórias* (stories) (1943); *A expedição ao país do ouro branco* (history) (1944); *Mistérios da terra* (ethnography) (1944); *Calenga* (stories) (1945); *A maravilhosa viagem dos exploradores portugueses* (ethnography) (1946); *Terra morta* (novel) (1949); *Samba* (story) (1956); *A voz da estepe* (story) (1956); *Viragem* (novel) (1957); *Histórias da terra negra* (story, soap opera and a narrative) (1960); *Portrait: Jinga, reine de Ngola et de Matamba* (1962); *A chaga* (novel) (1970).

Viriato Francisco Clemente de Cruz²⁰⁴, simply known as Viriato da Cruz, was born in Porto Amboim, 1928. He is considered by some literary critics as the first driving force of the Angolan poetry as well as of the liberation movement against the Portuguese colonial rule. His literary works include: *Poemas* (1974); *Coletânea de Poemas, 1947-1950*, (1961).

Artur Carlos Maurício Pestana dos Santos, best known for Pepetela, was born in Benguela in 1941. He is one of the most gifted Angolan literary critics and writers. His writings reflect back on the contemporary Angolan history and about the social problems Angola has faced. *Mayombe* (1980), for example, is about the guerrilla fighters, their lives and thoughts during war in the bush. *Yaka* (1985) tells a story of a family of colonizers living in the city of Benguela. *A Geração da Utopia* (1992) denounces the frustration among some Angolans, who have participated in the liberation movement, after the independence. This frustration is shown because what they had fought for (freedom, social and economic prosperity) is not what they are currently experiencing today.

Angolan pre-colonial history is also an elected theme in some of Pepetela's books. It can be read in *A Gloriosa Família* (1997) and *Lueji* (1990). Nevertheless, most of his recent works have been very critical about the social situation of Angola today. Novels such as *Jaime Bunda* (2001), *Predadores* (2005) (a severe critique of the Angolan dominant upper-class elite), *O Quase fim do Mundo* (2008) (an Apocalyptic allegory); *O Planalto e a Estepe* (2009) (an examination of the connections between ex-communist countries and Angola) are part of his critical literary works. Perhaps his academic background has a lot to do with the type of writings he produces. Pepetela is a sociologist.²⁰⁵

Óscar Ribas was a fascinating writer. He is clearly the pioneer of modern Angolan ethnography. His work *Ilundo* is a sensational ethnographic investigation of local traditions. In this

²⁰⁴ For more detail see Carlos Serrano's article "Viriato da Cruz: Um intelectual Angolano do Século XX. A Memória que se faz Necessária", available online www.file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/102613-179263-1-SM.pdf accessed in 2017; Edna Maria dos Santos's article "Viriato da Cruz e Agostinho Neto: História, Poesia, Música e Revolução" in *Revista Magistro*, Vol., Num.1, 2010, pp. 65 – 73; M. Viriato da Cruz Laban, *Cartas de Pequim*, Luanda: Ed. Chá de Caxinde, 2003.

²⁰⁵ For more information about him see Igor Cusack. "Pepetela." *Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures: Continental Europe and Its Empires*. Eds. Prem Poddar, Rajeev S. Patke and Lars Jensen. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008. p. 486.

Here are his other works: (1972) - *As Aventuras de Ngunga*; (1978) - *Muana Puó*; (1985) - *O Cão e os Caluandas*; (1995) - *O Desejo de Kianda*; (1997) - *Parábola do Cágado Velho*; (2000) - *A Montanha da Água Lilás*; 2007 - *O Terrorista de Berkeley, Califórnia*; (2008) - *Contos de Morte*; (2011) - *A Sul. O Sombreiro*; (2011) *Crônicas com Fundo de Guerra*; (2013) *O Tímido e as Mulheres*; (2015) *Crônicas Maldispostas*; (2016) *Se o Passado não tivesse Asas*.

way, Ribas promotes African values, customs, and diversity. Unfortunately, his works²⁰⁶ have not been studied that much.²⁰⁷

Agostinho Neto, born in 1922 in the village of Kaxikane in a region called Icolo-Bengo, the same as Uanhenga Xitu, is probably the best known writer in Angola or elsewhere. Neto was a medical doctor, who was involved in politics in Portugal, with the Portuguese Communist Party, of which he is widely believed to have become a member, getting soon in trouble with the political police, PIDE. Because of that, he was jailed three times. Neto eventually became the first president of Angola in 1975. Among his literary works, the best known is *A Sagrada Esperança*. It was translated in many world's languages including in Esperanto. Although well-known as the major Angolan poet by his followers, "Neto's published output is very small,"²⁰⁸ but his political influence and vision is rare.²⁰⁹ *A Renúncia Impossível* is also his small collection of unpublished poems released by the Portuguese scholar Manuel Ferreira in 1987. All in all, Neto published seventy poems.

As Phillis Butler puts it,

The question arises, therefore, whether Neto the poet is famous not primarily because of his poetry but because he was the leader of the MPLA and eventually became the President of Angola. Neto was above all a man of action, a man whose life was entirely dedicated to the struggle for the liberation of Angola and to the construction of a strong and independent African nation. His commitment to political action from his earliest days as a student in Portugal was matched by his later determination to lead the MPLA to victory. It seems natural, therefore, to approach Agostinho Neto the poet by way of Agostinho Neto the political man, that is, to read his poems as both evidence of his political commitment and as examples of his political vision.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ *Nuvens que ficam verdes*, (1927) (novela); *Resgate de uma falta de educação* (1929) (novela); *Flores e espinhos Uanga*, (1950); *Ecos da minha terra natal*, (1952); *Uanga – Feitiço (Romance Foclórico)*; *Ilundo – Espiritos e Ritos Angolanos* (1958, 1975); *Missosso 3 volumes* (1961, 1962, 1964); *Alimentação regional angolana* (1965); *Izomba – Associativismo e recreio* (1965); *Sunguilando – Contos tradicionais angolanos* (1967, 1989); *Kilandukily – Contos e instantâneos* (1973); *Tudo isto aconteceu – poesia* (1992); *Dicionário de Regionalismos angolanos* (Date?).

²⁰⁷ See Russell G. Hamilton, *Voices from an Empire: a history of Afro-Portuguese Literature*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1975; Carmen Lucia Tindó Ribeiro Secco, "Óscar Ribas e as Literaturas da Noite: a arte de sunguilar" in *Mulemba*, No. 3, UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro/Brasil/Dezembro/ 2010, available online www.setorlitafrica.letas.ufri.br/mulemba/artigo.php?art=artigo_3_3.php accessed in 2017

²⁰⁸ See Patrick Chabal, "Aspects of Angolan Literature: Luandino Vieira and Agostinho Neto" in *African Languages and Cultures*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1995). Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1771733>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:38.

²⁰⁹ See also Iko Carreira, *O pensamento político de Agostinho Neto*, Lisboa: D. Quixote, 1996.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 32.

For Butler, this observation is useful in the sense that “writings of political leaders are always relevant to the understanding of their political action, though how, and to what extent, are questions which are not easily answered”.²¹¹ “It is also useful in the sense that they provide biographical material which can serve to illuminate the leader's personality, his psyche, his state of mind in a way which other historical sources would not reveal. It is useful, finally, because poetry - even, and particularly, if it is 'political' - is a form of literary expression which allows a more immediate mediation between political will and political vision,”²¹² Butler adds.

I could not agree more with Butler's claim. Not only life and writings of political leaders are relevant to the understanding of their political action, but also the novelist's and the ethnographer's. Earlier in this chapter, Diamond said the same thing: “the novel, then, may be an agent of political culture, and the novelist a political philosopher and teacher.”²¹³

Biographical and literary resources provided by these writings not only can bring light to the writers' personalities, their state of mind, but also the world in which they live or write about. Usually, other historical sources do not reveal them. Ana Martinho, cited earlier, puts it in a very interesting way; “narratives are not merely reproductions of the so-called traditional oral stories and histories. They are cultural testimonies of national travellers, and epitomize transitions experienced as well as symbolic, cartographic, and cultural routes.”²¹⁴

This claim is important, because of what I discuss next in chapters three and four. Basically, after discussing the concepts of literature, literary theory, literary criticism, ethnography, social construction and representation and how they relate to African literature, I focus now on the subjects of my research: Chinua Achebe and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho. They also provide theoretical material which can contribute to the understanding of how the language of social science fuses with that of the literary imagination.

²¹¹ Ibid, p. 32

²¹² Ibid, p. 32.

²¹³ Larry Diamond, Op. cit., p. 435.

²¹⁴ Ana Maria Martinho Gale, *The Protean Web: Literature and Ethnography in Lusophone Africa*, Lisboa: Edições Colibri, pp. 10 – 11.

Subsequently, the next two chapters are about the biographical notes of the subjects of my research and lay the ground for a comparative discussion of their texts *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá visitar Pastores*.

Chapter III: Chinua Achebe

3. 1. Introduction

This chapter gives a description of Chinua Achebe's life, his works and influences received. Each relevant literary work is briefly reviewed. *Things Fall Apart* receives closer attention serving, in this way, as a brief introduction to the comparative discussions found in chapters five and six.

This chapter also elaborates on Achebe's position in the Nigerian literary repertoire, discussed in the previous chapter. Basically, the objective it pursues is whether or not Achebe is as highly valued in Nigeria as elsewhere. Thus, reflecting on the social, literary and political influences received by Achebe in and out of Nigeria was necessary in order to meet this objective. Also, a reflection was conducted to research existing sources concerning him and his works, in order to facilitate the comparative study.

In fact, *Things Fall Apart* receives closer attention in this chapter. The history of the book, its themes and influences are analysed and a thematic description of it is also given.

3. 2. Biographical Notes

Albert Chinualumogu Achebe, born in 1930 and deceased in 2013 in U.S., best known for his pen name, was a Nigerian novelist, poet, professor and critic. His parents were Isaiah Okafo Achebe and Janet Anaenechi Iloegbunam²¹⁵, converts of the Protestant Church Mission Society in Nigeria. Achebe's name, Chinualumogu, means *May God fight on my behalf* and it was a prayer for divine protection and stability.²¹⁶

Achebe grew up in the Igbo town of Ogidi in South-eastern Nigeria. At the age of six he unwillingly entered St. Philips' Central School. He was quickly moved to a higher class when the school's chaplain noticed his intelligence. He could spell and read very well even as a boy. Because of this he was granted a scholarship.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Isaiah Okafo Achebe and Janet Anaenechi Iloegbunam Achebe stood at a crossroad of traditional culture and Christian influence; this made a significant impact on the children, especially Chinualumogu. After the youngest daughter was born, the family moved to Isaiah Achebe's ancestral town of Ogidi, where is now the state of Anambra.

²¹⁶ See "Chinua Achebe: A Biography by Ezenwa-Ohaeoto," a review by Stewart Brown in *African Affairs*, Vol. 98, No. 392 (Jul., 1999), pp. 433-434, published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723539> .Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:50.

²¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 433 – 434.

At the age of twelve, Achebe moved away from his family to the village of Nekede. In Nekede, Achebe started to love a traditional art form called *Mbari*, which seeks to invoke the gods' protection through symbolic sacrifices in the form of sculpture and collage. It may be the point where Achebe started to appreciate traditional religion.

In 1944, Achebe was accepted at the prestigious Dennis Memorial Grammar School in Onitsha, a Government College in Umuahia. This was a school established in 1929 to educate Nigeria's future elite. Its academic standards were very high, rigorous and elitist, accepting only boys with exceptional abilities. English was the only language endorsed, not only with the purpose of developing proficiency but also of cementing national unity among these pupils, coming from different Nigerian language groups. Students could be punished if they were caught speaking their mother tongues in the school. Achebe did get punished once for asking a friend to pass the soap in Igbo.

Once there, Achebe changed levels twice in his first year, spending only four years in secondary school, instead of the standard five. Achebe was unsuited to the school's sports program and belonged instead to a group of exceptional pupils.²¹⁸

Earlier in his life, Achebe started to read many significant texts that would shape his personality, his state of mind, but also his worldviews. He read Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1901), the autobiography of an American former slave, a book which probably showed him another dimension of American history. He also read classic novels, such as *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), *David Copperfield* (1850), and *Treasure Island* (1883) together with tales of colonial life such as H. Rider Haggard's *Allan Quatermain* (1887) and John Buchan's *Prester John* (1910). Probably, this was his turning point: the transformation of the simple boy into an icon of literature, a reader of literature to a creator of it.²¹⁹

In 1948, Nigeria's first university opened; it was also known as University College or the University of Ibadan. Achebe was admitted in as a student of medicine. He did not like it. After a year of hard work, he changed to English, history, and theology. He lost his scholarship as a result, and

²¹⁸ Ibid, p. 433.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p. 433 – 434.

had to pay tuition fees. This university had a strong English faculty. It formed many famous writers such as Elechi Amadi, Wole Soyinka, John Pepper Clark, and Christopher Okigbo.²²⁰

Polar Undergraduate was Achebe's first piece of work. It was written in 1950. Other essays and letters about philosophy and freedom, some of which were published in another campus magazine, *The Bug*, followed.

He wrote his first short story entitled "In a Village Church" which described life in rural Nigeria, the Christian religion and its icons, a style which appears in many of his later works. Most of his later works at the university examined conflicts between tradition and modernity, and tried to establish a dialogue between both sides and understand them. Still at the university, Achebe began to explore the fields of Christian history and African traditional religions.

It seems that it was also during his studies at Ibadan that Achebe may have begun to become critical of European literature about Africa. Books such as *Mister Johnson* by the Irish novelist Joyce Cary's (1939) were reviewed by Achebe.

While he meditated on his possible career paths, Achebe applied for an English teaching position at the Merchants of Light School at Oba, a very old school. It was also called "bad bush" because it was believed to possess unfriendly spirits hovering inside the building. Curiously, later, in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe describes a similar area with the name "evil forest", where the Christian missionaries are given a place to build their church.

Achebe moved to Lagos, became a journalist for a local radio after leaving Light School. The city of Lagos made a significant impression on him because of its size and cultural diversity. It was full of migrants from the rural villages. Achebe describes the social and political life of this city in his 1960's novel *No Longer at Ease*.²²¹

He started to work seriously on a novel while in Lagos. It proved to be challenging, since very little African fiction had been written in English, although Amos Tutuola's *Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) and Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the City* (1954) were notable exceptions. While appreciating

²²⁰ See "Chinua Achebe: A Biography by Ezenwa-Ohaeoto" Review by: Stewart Brown *African Affairs*, Vol. 98, No. 392 (Jul., 1999), pp. 433-434. Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723539> .Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:50.

²²¹ See Adina Câmpu, "Tradition versus Modernity in Chinua Achebe's 'No Longer at Ease'" in *Bulletin of the Transilvania: University of Braşov*, Series IV, Vol. 6 (55) No.2 – 2013, pp. 1 – 7.

Ekwensi's work, Achebe worked hard to develop his own style. It is believed that a visit to Nigeria by Queen Elizabeth II in 1956 might have brought issues of colonialism and politics to the surface, and might have been a significant moment for Achebe's writings too.²²²

His first trip outside Nigeria was an opportunity to improve his technical production skills. In London, he met a novelist named Gilbert Phelps, to whom he offered a manuscript. Phelps was enthusiastic about it, asking Achebe if he could show it to his editor and publishers. Achebe declined, insisting that "it needed more work. "And that manuscript would be *Things Fall Apart* two years later in 1958.

Achebe got himself involved in politics, especially in the Biafra war, having become a supporter and a defender of its causes, when the region of Biafra broke from Nigeria in 1967. The Biafra war literally ravaged the population and starvation and violence were logically inevitable. Given that Achebe supported Biafra independence, he was often seen appealing to the people of Europe and America for aid.

The Nigerian government retook the region in 1970 and he was obliged to get more involved in politics, as it was expected. He joined a political party but soon resigned due to frustration over the corruption and elitism he witnessed. Then he decided to move to the U.S, where he lived for several years in the 1970s. He came back in the 1980s to Nigeria, only to return back to the United States after a car accident which left him partially disabled. There in America he became the David and Marianna Fisher University Professor and Professor of African studies at Brown University.

Earlier in his life, Achebe got married with Christie Okoli and had a big family with her. In the year *Things Fall Apart* was published, he moved to the state of Enugu and there he met his future wife, who had grown up in the area. In 1961, Achebe and Okoli were married on the campus of the University of Ibadan. Christie Achebe described their marriage as one of trust and love. Children and grandchildren did not wait to be born given that it was naturally expected in Africa. Children are a blessing for marriage.²²³

It is said that Achebe was a good father and grandfather. Most of his grandchildren visited him regularly and spent several days with him. Despite being disabled, he managed to give them the

²²² <http://www.biography.com/people/chinua-achebe-20617665> accessed in September 2016.

²²³ Ibid.

exact attention grandchildren look for. He died on the 21st of March 2013. This African icon in literature²²⁴ was finally gone forever but his legacy will certainly live on and on, and I hope it will still continue to influence many more generations to come.

On the day he died, I heard a reporter from the BBC “Focus on Africa”, at their London offices, interviewed about Achebe’s death, saying: “Chinua Achebe is still big...he is not only a national hero but also an African hero. His memory will live on because every child in school in Nigeria grew up reading him.” That is certainly the future of Nigerian literature.

Thus, Achebe is also a product and creator of African literature. His texts replicate his country, his culture, his people, his language, his education, his work, his family, in all, his life. From a literary point of view, he is both product and creator of his own literary contexts and style.²²⁵

3. 3. Achebe’s Relevant Works

Achebe published extensively, among his works we find books and essays. In this subchapter, I shortly review some of these relevant works. Here they are: *Things Fall Apart* (1958); *No Longer at Ease* (1960); *The Sacrificial Egg and Other Stories* (1962); *Arrow of God* (1964); *A Man of the People*, (1966); *Chike and the River* (1966); *Beware, Soul-Brother, and Other Poems* (1971); *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (with John Iroaganachi) (1972); *Girls at War* (1973); *Christmas at Biafra, and Other Poems* (1973); *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, (1975); *The Flute* (1975); *The Drum* (1978); *Don't Let Him Die: An Anthology of Memorial Poems for Christopher Okigbo* (editor with Dubem Okafor) (1978); *Aka Ita: An Anthology of Igbo Poetry* (co-editor) (1982); *The Trouble With Nigeria* (1984); *African Short Stories* (1984); *Anthills of the Savannah* (1988); *Hopes and Impediments* (1988).²²⁶

This achievement is remarkable. One could say that he published an average of more than one book every two years. I start to review the second book in the collection of these selected works, given that the first book in this list is the text under analysis in my thesis and will be retaken and given a due analysis in the last point of this chapter.

²²⁴See Stephen Williams, “An Icon of African Literature: a Man of the People,” in *African Business*, August/September, 2014, pp. 72 – 73.

²²⁵ See Rose Ure Mezu, *Chinua Achebe: The Man and His Works*, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2006.

²²⁶ See also F. Abiola Irele, “Chinua Achebe at Seventy: Homage to Chinua Achebe,” in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 32, No. 3, Fall 2001, pp. 1 – 2.

No Longer at Ease is the story of an Igbo man, Obi Okonkwo, who leaves his village to receive a British education and apply for a job in the Nigerian colonial civil service, but who struggles to adapt to a western lifestyle and ends up taking bribes.²²⁷ The novel is the sequel to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which concerned the struggle of Obi Okonkwo's grandfather against the changes brought by the English. The book's title comes from the closing lines of T. S. Eliot's poem, *The Journey of the Magi*:

*I returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
with an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.*²²⁸

The style of quoting famous expressions like *no longer at ease* from other texts is Achebe's technique to catch his readers' attention. He uses the remarkable quotes either to open or close his novels. He does exactly the same thing in *Things Fall Apart*. *No longer at ease* opens with the trial of Obi Okonkwo accused of accepting a bribe. It then retells the story starting from the point where it should begin: the departure of Obi to England until Obi ended up on trial.

The story is very interesting. First, because Achebe reuses the name of the main character of his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, now Obi Okonkwo; second, because Obi Okonkwo is Okonkwo's grandson, whose personality is described as completely opposite to his grandfather's; third, because Obi Okonkwo is in conflict with what his culture and religion hold as true and lawful; fourth, because he disobeys his community's recommendations to study law in order to fight bribery and injustice. He studied English instead. And finally because he brings back with him more vices and immoral attitudes instead, which then contradicted the communal values, causing more chaos into the community. Vices such as bribery, abortion, theft and idleness were severely reproached.

Here, it appears that Achebe was trying to withhold consequences from the European presence in the Igbo land. This presence gave origin to a lifestyle which created more cracks within the local cultural system. Cultural values, principles, philosophies and beliefs were questioned and challenged, something not experienced before by the local community. Obi is seen here as an intruder, the person who represents those people who want to bring innovation to their culture while

²²⁷ See Chinua Achebe, *No longer at Ease*, first published in 1960 for Christie.

²²⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

the rest of the community reluctantly struggles to preserve the old. Clearly, tradition and modernity are in contrast here. This book is part of Achebe's trilogy in which he seems to have set up the premises of what he developed later in his works.²²⁹

The Sacrificial Egg and Other Stories is also about the cultural conflict that led to opposition between African and Western realities. In "The Sacrificial Egg", the conflict between Igbo and western civilization, specifically European, is presented openly. The protagonist, whose name is Julius Obi, is a product of European and African culture. He is a western educated Igbo.

The story begins in the empty market named Nkwo. Julius Obi criticises the traditional folklores as superstitious. People warn him. But he does not take the warnings seriously. Unfortunately, the smallpox disease gets him. In fact, the story shows the differences between viewpoints of the colonialists and traditional Africans. Because of those differences, conflict is inevitable. Having been educated in the West, Julius believes from what he learned that the smallpox is a kind of disease and not some work of evil spirits. Now, who should he believe? He stands in the middle of this riddle. The novel tells this drama.²³⁰

Arrow of God (1964) is Achebe's third novel following *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*. These three books are sometimes called *The African Trilogy*. The novel centres on a character called Ezeulu, the chief priest of several Igbo villages in Colonial Nigeria, who confronts colonial powers and Christian missionaries in the 1920s.

The phrase "Arrow of God" is taken from an Igbo proverb in which a person, or sometimes an event, is said to represent the will of God. Once again, the technique is used. This time the phrase is taken from an Igbo proverb. The novel is set amongst the villages of the Igbo people in British Nigeria of the 1920s. Chinwe Christiana Okechukwu says that

Apart from its literary and aesthetic merits, *Arrow of God* demonstrates the ineffectiveness of logic devoid of rhetoric as a means of persuasion in social matters and the inability of rhetoric divorced from dialectic to lead a society to success when it is confronted by contingent matters that require the rector's masterly steering of the populace toward right decisions. At each point in the novel, the reader sees that the protagonist, Ezeulu, is a wise man who knows how things ought to be in his society,

²²⁹ See Adina Câmpu, op. cit. pp. 1 – 7.

²³⁰ See Peter Jazzy Ekeh, "Why Achebe was denied the Nobel Prize," in *New African*, June, 2013, p. 25.

is astute and foresighted enough to discern the impact the invading culture is going to have, and tries to prepare himself and the society for it. However, in spite of his dialectical discovery of the truth, Ezeulu fails to persuade his audience because he fails to evoke the proper pathos and because he lacks the appropriate ethos.²³¹

A Man of the People, written in 1966, is a satirical novel. It is Achebe's fourth novel. The novel tells the story of the young and educated Odili, the narrator, and his conflict with Chief Nanga, his former teacher who enters a career in politics in an unnamed modern African country. Odili represents the changing younger generation; Nanga represents the traditional customs of Nigeria. Again, the conflict between the new and old generations is addressed. The book ends with a military coup.²³²

Chike and the River is a children's story by Chinua Achebe. It was written in 1966, and was the first of several children's stories Achebe wrote. It is a magical tale of morals, boundaries, bravery, and growth.

Beware, Soul-Brother, and Other Poems is Achebe's book of poems, something which was rare to see happening. Chinua Achebe is best known as a novelist. The civil war in Nigeria was not a time for writing full-length books. He found poetry as a means of expressing his distress, even though few of the poems speak directly of the war. This book was certainly a means of expressing his distress caused by the Biafra war. The poems carry a sad tone. Achebe's collection of short fiction and prose pieces covered a period of at least twenty years, tracing his development and changing concerns as a writer. His volume of poetry, on the other hand, is from a much shorter period and is unified by its focus on the civil war and the physical, social and psychological consequences of that war.

How The Leopard Got His Claws; it seems that this book was wrongly attributed to Achebe's repertoire. It started as a manuscript written by John Iroaganachi in 1967 called *How the Dog was Domesticated*. When it was published five years later under its final title, the book was attributed to Chinua Achebe first and then Iroaganachi.

²³¹ Chinwe Christiana Okechukwu, "Oratory and Social Responsibility: Chinua Achebe's 'Arrow of God'" in *Callaloo*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), pp. 568 – 569. Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3300587> .Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:54.

See also Smith, Daniel Jordan (September 22, 2001). "'The arrow of God' Pentecostalism, inequality, and the supernatural in South-Eastern Nigeria." *Africa* (Edinburgh University Press) 71 (4): 587. See Mathuray, Mark (2003). "Realizing the Sacred: Power and Meaning in Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God". *Research in African Literatures* 34 (3): 46.

²³² See Mercedes Mackay (January 1967). "Review: A Man of the People by Chinua Achebe". *African Affairs* (262): 81. See Ezenwa-Ohaeto, *Chinua Achebe: A Biography*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. p. 109.

Girls at War and Other Stories is a book that reveals the essence of life in Nigeria and traces twenty years in the literary career of Achebe. In this collection of stories, he takes us inside the heart and soul of a people whose pride and ideals were hurt. So they must compete with the simple struggle to survive every single day. This fiction re-creates with energy and authenticity the major issues of daily life in Africa.²³³

Christmas at Biafra, and Other Poems is a collection of poems. It provides temporary insights into the culture and beliefs of western Africa.

Morning Yet on Creation Day is a collection of fifteen essays of Achebe. The first part of the book focuses on literature and the second on Africa itself. Several issues stand at the forefront: concerns about 'African literature' (is there such a thing? should there be such a thing?), the question of what language to write in, the role of the writer in African society and so forth. For Achebe, literature has a prominent role in society because it is a living phenomenon. He is particularly pleased with the fact of seeing more books around and more libraries. He shows his satisfaction with today children reading more books than he did in the following words:

Two factors give them an advantage over my own generation. There are more books around and more libraries; and there are books with a familiar ring and background. The availability of books is of crucial importance in creating both committed readers and future writers.²³⁴

Achebe's passion and true belief in the power of reading to compose excellent pieces of writing was always evidenced in many of his academic discussions.

The Flute is one of his two picture books published in 1977 (for information on the other, see *The Drum*). Like *The Drum*, *The Flute* is an adaptation of a traditional Igbo folktale, using images.

The Drum, "Tortoise and the Birds," is the longest story in which the tortoise tricks the birds. It asks them to come along with them to a feast in the sky where he then, through wordplay, manages to claim the entire feast for himself. This story is also told in *Things Fall Apart* by one of Okonkwo's wives to her daughter. Anyone familiar with African mythology will notice that the tortoise, in most African storytelling traditions, is a trickster animal, a deceitful character who usually breaks traditional norms either for his own gains or simply for the fun of it. In some traditions, it is even

²³³http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/37775.Girls_at_War_and_Other_Stories accessed on 17/08/2013 at 09:19

²³⁴<http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/achebec/mornyet.htm> accessed on 17/08/2013 at 10:41

represented as a very ingenious and smart figure. Achebe makes the tortoise a prototypical post-colonial leader in Africa who may initially have good intentions, when campaigning for election, but in the end, when he wins it, is corrupted by power, forgets his promises and brings only terror to his people.

Don't Let Him Die: An Anthology of Memorial Poems for Christopher Okigbo is a story about Christopher Ifekandu Okigbo (1930–1967) who was a Nigerian poet and died fighting for the independence of Biafra. He is today widely acknowledged as one of the most outstanding postcolonial English-language African poets and one of the major writers of the twentieth century.

In *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Achebe addresses Nigeria's problems, aiming at challenge Nigerians and urging them to reject old habits which stop Nigeria from becoming a modern and attractive country. In this famous book, he claims that the only trouble with Nigeria is the failure of leadership. Good leaders can resolve inherent problems such as tribalism, lack of patriotism, social injustice and mediocrity, indiscipline and corruption.

It is brief, concise, interesting and revealing. The realities spoken about are tearing Nigeria apart as we write. It seems, therefore, that the book, *The Trouble with Nigeria* is a “prognosis, a prophetic writing with unrivalled effect. This is a book not only applicable to Nigeria but Africa as a whole. It should be in the breast pocket of every African leader and citizen.”²³⁵

Contemporary African Short Stories is an anthology of stories published by Heinemann in 1992.

Anthills of the Savannah is a novel. The story takes place in an imaginary West African country, where an officer, identified only as Sam and known as His Excellency, has taken power following a military coup. The drama is told with a lot of sarcasm.

Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays is a collection of essays by Chinua Achebe, was published in 1988. It warns critics against generalizing all African people into a monolithic culture, or using Africa as a simplistic metaphor.²³⁶ African cultures are close to yet completely different from one another. You cannot travel to Egypt, meet the Egyptians and say that you now are an expert on

²³⁵See http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/602809.The_Trouble_with_Nigeria 17/08/2013 at 12:20

²³⁶See also Achebe, Chinua (1988) *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays, 1965-1987*. Heinemann, and Edwards-Yearwood, Grace (December 31, 1989). Africa Is Nobody's Metaphor: *Hopes and Impediments* by Chinua Achebe (review). *Los Angeles Times*.

African people and cultures. African cultures cannot be put in the same melting pot and thought to be all the same.²³⁷

After all, how can Achebe and his literary repertoire be positioned in the Nigerian literary canon? This evaluation follows next.

3. 4. Position in the Nigerian Literary Canon

Peter Jazzy Ezech writes:

Achebe was Nigeria's greatest export to the modern world. And he was self-made in the intellectual or ideological sense.²³⁸

A comment was heard on the radio and read in the newspaper that Professor Chinua Achebe, the father of modern African literature²³⁹ and world-acclaimed intellectual, was no more. Yet, compared to other legendary writers like William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway and George Orwell, Nigeria's own Achebe lived long on earth. Had he left the stage of literature at fifty-two as Shakespeare did or forty-seven as Orwell did, the world would have been denied the opportunity of having *The Trouble with Nigeria*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, *The Education of a British-Protected Child*, *There Was a Country* and several other pieces. This great writer from Africa, this rare gift to mankind lived to old age. So, in the Nigerian canon, Achebe is positioned as the grandfather of modern African literature, though the word modern is controversial; as a world-acclaimed intellectual; as great as William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway and George Orwell, probably Charles Dickens of Africa; as a novelist, politician, a philosopher, a literary critic and an ethnographer (because culture is at the centre of his writings).

Although he published his greatest work, *Things Fall Apart*, at the relatively young age of twenty-seven, Achebe never rested until his eighty-second birthday. When he gave his first novel its title, he was referring to the falling apart of African cultures and traditions due to the coming of the white man. Today that title is subject to wider interpretation: Nigeria itself is falling apart because of hunger, war, emigration, corruption, terrorism, social inequality and so forth; Europe is falling apart because of the British Brexit, for example; Syria is falling apart because of its brutal war; the Great Lakes are falling apart because of wars being fought in the Republic of Congo and South Sudan;

²³⁷ See <http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/achebec/homexile.htm> accessed on 17/08/2013 at 10:50.

²³⁸ Peter Jazzy Ezech, "Why Achebe was denied the Nobel Prize," in *New African*, June, 2013, p. 25.

²³⁹ See Herb Boyd, "'Father of African Literature'" in *The New York Amsterdam News*, March 28-April 3, 2013, p. 35.

Angola seems to fall apart due to financial recession caused by the fall of the price of oil in the international market and so forth; just to mention a few.

Achebe, however, never rested and watched quietly the events unfolding. Like the character Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*, therefore, he became a social crusader against injustice, corruption and bad governance in his own country. Everything Achebe wrote about in *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 30 years ago, for instance, is still relevant because the rulers of Nigeria and Africa have not cared or listened.

As said before, most African critics see Achebe as an Icon in African literature,²⁴⁰ a rare gift to humankind. He was compared to Shakespeare, exalted and acclaimed more than any living African writer so far. Chinua Achebe has changed the face of African literature and culture. The Nigerian canon would be impoverished without him.

I am tempted to say that the roots of “modern” African literature are in Nigeria given that it has produced a great number of excellent writers, as shown in chapter II. Not even the sum of all good writers coming from other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa surpasses such a score. Achebe is possibly the best Nigerian writer.

Indeed, few missionaries or visionaries in the world have received acclaim in their lifetime. Achebe, the extraordinary and visionary writer, can't be an exception. Now that he is gone, Nigerian leaders and their followers should do justice to his memory by doing what he said but which they ignored while he was still alive.

As a notable writer, Achebe used his influence to fight for the persecuted. He correctly diagnosed the trouble with Nigeria - a failure of leadership. He condemned tribalism, nepotism, corruption and other ills of the country. Even after he had a car accident in 1990 and was sentenced to the wheelchair, this advocate of good governance and good writing did not surrender. This was an Achebe; when comes another such as he?

Son of a Christian missionary family, the writer chose not to win souls for Christ but to make right the wrongdoings in society through writing. He preaches morality in all his novels including *No Longer at Ease*, *Arrow of God*, *A Man of the People*, and *Chike and the River*.

²⁴⁰ See Stephen Williams, “An Icon of African Literature: a Man of the People,” in *African Business*, August/September, 2014, pp. 72 – 73.

Africa has lost many of its great minds in recent years. Only a few match Achebe's greatness. But I believe Achebe is one of them and he is not the last to come.²⁴¹

Achebe's style is one of the most analysed styles, simple, and actually full of complexity. It is realistic and transports many stylistic features and contents of the language spoken by the Igbo. It is written in English but it is not British English as such. By sprinkling the language with proverbs and other cultural references, Achebe slowly and naturally introduces the reader to his own culture. Achebe's honest and original style makes him an ideal spokesman for African literature.

Since the 1950, Nigeria has witnessed "the flourishing of a new literature which has drawn sustenance from both traditional oral literature and from the present and rapidly changing society,"²⁴² writes Margaret Laurence in her book *Long Drums and Cannons: Nigerian Dramatists and Novelists*.

Unlike some African writers struggling for acceptance among contemporary English language novelists, Achebe has been able to avoid imitating the trends in English literature. Rejecting the European notion "that art should be accountable to no one, and [needs] to justify itself to nobody,"²⁴³ as he puts it in his book of essays, *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, Achebe has embraced instead the idea at the heart of the African oral tradition: that "art is, and always was, at the service of man. Our ancestors created their myths and told their stories for a human purpose."²⁴⁴ For this reason, Achebe believes that "any good story, any good novel, should have a message, should have a purpose."²⁴⁵

Achebe is now considered to be the essential novelist on African identity, nationalism, and decolonization. His main focus seems to be "cultural ambiguity and contestation." The complexity of novels such as *Things Fall Apart* "depends on Achebe's ability to bring competing cultural systems and their languages to the same level of representation, dialogue, and contestation."²⁴⁶

²⁴¹See <http://allafrica.com/stories/201303251538.html> accessed on 17/08/2013 at 11:31

²⁴² Margaret Laurence, *Long Drums and Cannons: Nigerian Dramatists and Novelists*, edited with an introduction by Nora Foster Stovel, Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2001, p. 11.

²⁴³ See Chinua Achebe, *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ See Amy Sickels, "The Critical Reception of *Things Fall Apart*", in *Critical Insights: Things Fall Apart* by M. Keith Booker (ed.), Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 2011, pp. 33 – 35.

Achebe's concern with the African context has influenced his aesthetic, his novels and his poetry, as well as the technical aspects of his work. As Bruce King comments in *Introduction to Nigerian Literature*: "Achebe was the first Nigerian writer to successfully transmute the conventions of the novel, a European art form, into African literature." In an Achebe novel, King notes that "European character study is subordinated to the portrayal of communal life; European economy of form is replaced by an aesthetic appropriate to the rhythms of traditional tribal life."²⁴⁷

3. 5. *Things Fall Apart*

Achebe writes *Things Fall apart*²⁴⁸ to tell a story, which is both fictional and real, about Igbo people and their culture. The Igbo, in this case, are portrayed as the representative of all African people and culture. He believes that by writing about them, he is indirectly telling a story about all other African people.

Among many other issues, this author criticizes the "body of literature that presented Africa in a very bad light and Africans in very lurid terms,"²⁴⁹ i.e., a colonial type of literature that despised African culture, language, its people and its tradition as a shocking reality to the world, to either denounce lies about it or then to tell a story which is real and genuine. For that reason, it becomes imperative for him to demystify that body of literature. He uses resources such as proverbs and rhythms of Igbo language, grounded in its culture, but yet influenced by the English language to attest to the literariness of African literatures as a whole. That is why he emphasizes that

The last four or five hundred years of European contact with Africa produced a body of literature that presented Africa in a very bad light and Africans in very lurid terms. The reason for this had to do with the need to justify the slave trade and slavery... This continued until the Africans themselves, in the middle of the twentieth century, took into their own hands the telling of their story.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ <http://www.unc.edu/~hhalpin/ThingsFallApart/achebebio.html> accessed on 17/08/2013 at 12:01

²⁴⁸ See Oyeniyi Okunoye, "Half a Century of Reading Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*," in *English Studies*, Vol. 91, No. 1, (February 2010), 42 – 57.

²⁴⁹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/interviews/ba2000-08-02.htm> accessed in 2016. Chinua Achebe, "An African Voice". You can also see two interviews in which Achebe discusses the origins and purposes of his writing in "Chinua Achebe: The Art of Fiction CXXXIV," interviewed by Jerome Brooks in *The Paris Review*, Issue #133 (Winter 1994-5) and "An African Voice" Interview in *The Atlantic Online* (August 2, 2000)

²⁵⁰ <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/unbound/interviews/ba2000-08-02.htm> accessed in 2016.

Achebe still reinforced this point in an interview with Bill Moyers by saying that, “it is the storyteller, in fact who makes us what we are, who creates history. The story-teller creates the memory that the survivors must have – otherwise their surviving would have no meaning.”²⁵¹ Good stories survive and bad ones are overlooked.

Achebe is in line with the idea that “the power of the story as archetypal form survives various brutalization that the community has endured, the raves of colonization, the massacres of the Biafra civil war, the tortures and silencing of intellectuals and artists by local regimes.”²⁵² In fact, what he does in *Things Fall Apart* is to do justice to the story of Igbo people in order to recreate and retell it with courage but by correcting the colonial perspectives. *Things Fall Apart* reflects that context of brutalization, the raves of colonization, the massacres and the tortures that the Igbo community endured through time.

3. 5. 1. Historical and Literary Contexts

Things fall apart was written at the beginning of the independence wars of western African states, especially the Nigerian state. The title of the novel comes from William Butler Yeats²⁵³ poem the “Second Coming”:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned.

²⁵¹ Simon Gikandi, *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction*, London: Heinemann, 1991, p. 125.

²⁵² See Solomon O. Iyasere, “Oral Tradition in the Criticism of African Literature” in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Mar., 1975), pp. 107-119, published by: Cambridge University Press. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/159699>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:14, p. 113.

²⁵³ See A Norman Jeffares, *W B Yeats: A New Biography*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux (1989). William Butler Yeats was an Irish poet and one of the foremost figures of 20th century literature. Equally, he was a pillar of both the Irish and British literary establishments. Yeats was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival and along with Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and others founded the Abbey Theatre (a literary theatre created for the purpose of performing Irish and Celtic plays). In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature was the first Irishman honoured for what the Nobel Committee described as “inspired poetry which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation”. For more information, see <http://www.biography.com/people/william-butler-yeats-9538857> accessed in September 2016.

The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity (...) ²⁵⁴

This poem inspired Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. "Second Coming" contains some literature's most potent images of the twentieth century.

Achebe was one of those educated West Africans who came into adulthood in the 1950s, and who seemed to have been destined by history to inherit from the colonial powers the task of running the young "independent" nation-states.²⁵⁵ But, in-between there was a strong and brutal British colonial regime yet to disappear. Unless history was told differently, this pretension would simply be a wishful thinking. The novel is written in this context, 1958, in a year during which the first country, Ghana, won its independence from Britain. There was an enormous expectation and anxiety among this young generation of African "leaders" waiting to seize power and lead these newly emerging African states.

This narrative is, therefore, about the encounter and the clash of civilizations between Europe and Africa long before this pretension for independence was felt. The book recaptures the European colonization (culturally, linguistically, politically, economically and literarily) of Africa and retells it from the point of view of a colonized author by the end of the XIX and beginning of the XX century. This author is Chinua Achebe. He reclaims his own and his people's history through this novel. As he once said:

I believe in the complexity of the human story, and that there's no way you can tell that story in one way and say, 'this is it.' Always there will be someone who can tell it differently depending on where they are standing ... this is the way I think the world's stories should be told: from many different perspectives.²⁵⁶

The novel presents literary features such as the plot structure, characters, and use of folklore, songs, proverbs and chants. The result is a hybrid text, mixing elements of the European and American novel traditions with Igbo narrative patterns and social customs.

²⁵⁴ <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-second-coming/> accessed in September 2016.

²⁵⁵ Among these highly educated people are Jomo Kenyatta, Nelson Mandela, Agostinho Neto, Patricio Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral and others.

²⁵⁶ ("Chinua Achebe: The Art of Fiction CXXXVIV," interviewed by Jerome Brooks in *The Paris Review*, Issue #133 (Winter 1994-5) available on <http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1720/the-art-of-fiction-no-139-chinua-achebe> accessed in September 2016.

As Gikandi says, "this book marks Achebe's distinctive contribution in his invention of a new African narrative that could write against and decentralize a colonial discourse as a prelude to evoking an alternative space of representation."²⁵⁷ Gikandi links the colonists' denial of the colonized as a "people without an objective history to Achebe's reliance on narrative as the indispensable agent of history." So for him, the chronological organization of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* could be under the headings "Writing, Culture and Domination" and *No longer at Ease*, "Writing in the Marginal space."²⁵⁸

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is probably the most widely taught African novel in the U.S.A. It is assigned not only in English literary courses, but also in African history, ethnography and anthropology, and in courses on postcolonial cultural studies. As it was observed in the article entitled "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*", by Diana Akers Rhoads, "Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* represents the cultural roots of the Igbo in order to provide self-confidence, but at the same time he refers them to universal principles which vitiate their destructive potential."²⁵⁹

3. 5. 2. Plot and Themes

In *Things Fall Apart*, the whole story unfolds in two places, one called Umuofia and the other Mbanta, two villages situated in the hinterlands of the Igbo nation. Its main character is a man called Okonkwo, who after his epic encounter with Amalinze the Cat, becomes a legend in the clan of nine villages that Umuofia is part of. Okonkwo has three wives, eight children and two barns. He is a great warrior who killed over five people, whose heads were hanging on the walls of his huts to prove his bravery. Everyone in Umuofia knows the story of this man. Unlike his father, Okonkwo lived up by his dream of becoming the greatest man of his village, and he hoped to ascend to the category of famous elder despite his humble origins. He died for what he believed was the right thing to do and the natural course of action to take in Umuofia.

Nevertheless, Okonkwo is a headstrong and inflexible, short-tempered and uncompromising man, someone who refuses to surrender to the white people's way of doing things. Even when the white people came quietly and peacefully with their religion, won his brothers and sisters, and his

²⁵⁷ See Simon Gikandi, *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction*, London: Heinemann, 1991, p. 6.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

²⁵⁹ Diana Akers Rhoads, "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" in *African Studies Review* (September 1993) 36(2), p. 61.

clan could no longer act like one, and finally put a knife on the things that held them together and they fell apart,²⁶⁰ Okonkwo did not bend on his knees, but he chose suicide instead.

Deep inside, *Things Fall Apart* depicts the clash of civilizations, written by Samuel Harrington in his *Clash of Civilizations*, and the violent transitions in life and values brought about by the onset of British colonialism in Nigeria. It interposes western linguistic forms and literary traditions with Igbo words and phrases, proverbs, fables, tales, and other elements of African oral and communal storytelling traditions in order to record and preserve African oral traditions as well as to subvert the colonialist's language and culture.

Therefore, the themes found in the texts range from life to culture, dance, poetry, proverbs, colonization, wars, children, elders, women, hunting, fishing, marketplaces, Christianity, traditional religion, tradition and modernity, suicide, agriculture, music, wealth and poverty, wrestling, food and drinks, land and law, political governance, myths and folklores, housing and family, distribution and justice systems, universals and particulars, science and philosophies, death and immortality. *Things Fall Apart* is clearly a kind of "positivist ethnography"²⁶¹ where there is "the intersection of radical pedagogy [knowledge means in this context the political empowerment of the other] and postmodern theory,"²⁶² which is ethical, political and social.

Culture is believed not to be static; change is continuous, and flexibility is necessary for successful adaptation. Because Okonkwo cannot accept the change the Christians bring, he cannot adapt. In relation to tradition and modernity, the struggle between change and tradition is constant; however, this statement only appears to apply to Okonkwo. Change can very well be accepted, as shown by how the people of Umuofia refused to join Okonkwo as he kills the white man in the end.

Perhaps Okonkwo is not so much worried about change, but with the possibility of losing everything he conquered, such as his compound, his fortune, prestige, and titles, which are being threatened by new foreign values. Actually, Okonkwo's attitude is evidenced by most cultures when threatened by asylum-seekers arriving at their shores. It is shown throughout the book that Okonkwo cares deeply about these things, especially in his feelings of regret for missing a father figure who could bring him up conveniently in the early stages of his life.

²⁶⁰ See Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*... p. 129.

²⁶¹ Realist and critical ethnography.

²⁶² *Apud* Ana Martinho, *The Protean Web*..., p. 113.

We also find the notions of success, language, cultural history (which includes myths, religion, totems, superstitions, rituals, festivals, and icons); there are also themes that range from gender, murder, order to justice. Regarding order and justice Tanure Ojaide wrote that

In traditional Africa there are no jails. Justice is done for the reconciliation of the affected parties, not to set them on parallel paths the rest of their lives. In traditional courts, reparations, restitutions, and settlements are made to the offended party, but the community or family makes sure that the two parties are reconciled. The justices of Umuofia masquerades in *Things Fall Apart* are good examples of traditional African dispensation of justice.²⁶³

This work shows the many characteristics of the society and it does help us discuss it within the boundaries of literature and ethnography.

The following chapter elaborates on the Angolan writer Ruy Duarte de Carvalho.

²⁶³ Tanure Ojaide, "Modern African Literature and Cultural Identity" in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Dec., 1992), p. 48 Published by African Studies Association Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/525127>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 06:17.

Chapter IV: Ruy Duarte De Carvalho

4. 1. Introduction

This chapter reviews his life, his works and readings. Part of his relevant literary works is given through a synoptic analysis, but *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* receives much more attention, serving as an introduction to the comparative study that follows.

This chapter also discusses Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's position in the Angolan literary canons. Basically, the objective it pursues is to ascertain whether Ruy Duarte de Carvalho is also as highly appreciated in Angolan literature as he is elsewhere. The tracking of social, literary and political influences that he might have received within and outside of Angola is also necessary in order to reach this objective.

Towards the end, the book in question is analysed through literary, ethnographic and thematic descriptions. This will facilitate our comparative approach following the information about Achebe's and Carvalho's biographies.

4. 2. Biographical Notes

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho was born in 1941, in Santarém, Portugal, but was naturalized Angolan in 1983. His parents were originally from Portugal. He grew up in the south of Angola, where he accompanied his father – an adventurer and an elephant hunter – on hunting trips throughout the Namibian desert. He always saw himself as more Angolan than Portuguese. As he put it in his autobiography,

In the 50s of last century, I disembarked in Lisbon with a bicycle and an oil paint box in the luggage. These were precious gifts I could not part company with, one for a birthday and the other for the second year of high school, when, by family decision I was sent from Moçâmedes [Namibe] to get a diploma in Portugal, Santarém, within five years, as an agricultural technician. I never made use of the bicycle or the oil paint. I spent those five years as a boarding student, living in school premises, and both my oil paint, the acknowledgment of my most evident congenital talents, and the bicycle, the adjectification of glorious colonial teen years, were sacrificed to the discipline and the program of my stay in Portugal.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-biographical-ability-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2016.

He later studied cinematography in London. Having returned to Angola, he worked as a sheep farmer and studied traditional oral poetry in various African languages. He also devoted himself to studying, taking photos and filming isolated people who are living in the Angolan deserts as well as studying their traditions.²⁶⁵ As for cinematography, he writes:

Then, from 75 to 81, I made films for the Angolan television and the Angolan Institute of Cinema, and went around for a while very entertained filming all over Angola and thinking that my peculiar idea of making Angola known to the very Angolans, my countrymen, would be well received. When I realized that it would be impossible to keep on wanting to do cinema, not the one I wanted nor any other for that matter, I wrote an academic text to accompany one of the films I had shot in the south, hence obtaining a degree in the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, in Paris, that granted me immediate access to PhD candidacy.²⁶⁶

Carvalho's legacy is extensive; among his works one finds poetry, novels, narratives and filmed documentaries. As said above, he studied Anthropology at the *École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris from 1979 to 1986. The idea of studying anthropology seems to have born from his frustrations, partly experienced in the Angolan movie industry, where he could not do what he wanted. Later, he became a lecturer at Luanda's Agostinho Neto University,²⁶⁷ in which he was not happy either. He explains why.

²⁶⁵ Films directed by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho: In 1976: "Uma Festa para Viver, 40', p/b, 16mm, TPA, prémio da Solidariedade Afro-Asiática, Taschkent; Angola 76, É a Vez da Voz do Povo (série); "Sacode o Pó da Batalha", 40', p/b, TPA; "Está Tudo Sentado no Chão", 40', p/b, 16mm, TPA; "Como Foi Como Não Foi", 20', p/b, 16mm, TPA (prémio da Solidariedade Afro-Asiática, Festival de Moscovo.); Faz Lá Coragem, Camarada, 120', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; O Deserto e os Mucubais, 20', p/b, 16mm, TPA; In 1979: "Presente Angolano, Tempo Mumuíla (série); "A Huíla e os Mumuílas", 20', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; "Lua da Seca Menor", 60', p/b, 16mm, TAP; "Pedra Sozinha Não Sustém Panela", 40', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; "Hayndongo, O Valor de um Homem", 40', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; "Makumukas", 30', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; "O Kimbanda Kambia", 40', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; "Kimbanda", 20', cor, 16 mm, TPA; "Ekwenge", 20', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; "Ondyelwa", 40', cor, 16 mm, TPA; "Ofícios", 30', p/b, 16 mm, TPA; In 1980: Toda a série foi seleccionada para o Semana dos Cahiers du Cinéma; In 1981: "Paris e para o Fórum do Jovem Cinema, Festival de Cinema de Berlim; In 1982: "O Balanço do Tempo na Cena de Angola, 45', cor, 16 mm, IAC prémio para a melhor média metragem, Festival de Aveiro (1984); In 1983: Nelisita, 70', p/b, 16 mm, IAC (prémio especial do júri, Festival de Cartago prémio Cidade de Amiens (1983); prémio para a melhor realização e prémio da UNESCO; In 1984: Festival de Ouagadougou prémio para a melhor ficção, Festival de Aveiro prémios para o melhor filme, melhor realização, melhor actor e melhor utilização criativa do som; In 1989: "Moia: o recado das ilhas", 90' cor; In 1990: Festival de Cinema de Harare 1990. See <http://www.lusofoniapoetica.com/artigos/angola/rui-duarte-carvalho/biografia-ruy-duarte-carvalho.html> accessed in 2014.

²⁶⁶ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-biographical-ability-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2015.

²⁶⁷ Apart from Luanda, he lectured at S. Paulo, Berkeley and Coimbra Universities.

Starting in 87 I began teaching some discreet and badly paid classes in Social Anthropology in Luanda and I benefited from sabbatical licenses to accept invitations to teach and consume libraries in Paris, Bordeaux, Sao Paulo and Coimbra. From 92 onward I found a way of spending, every year, five months with the shepherds of Namibe. I decided then to make that information available without that tone of academic or report writing, as I had had my doses of those. And that is how I adopted the way of *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* [I'll be there, Visiting the Shepherds] that placed me afterwards on the trail of a *semi-fiction* that I've been insisting on of late. And I also stopped writing poems as such, more and more so.²⁶⁸

His frustrations in the Angolan movie and education industries seem to have paved the way for his achievements in anthropological studies and fictional and cultural writings. He stopped writing poems and started writing on issues concerning identities. For example, he gathered many collective answers on issues related to the way of living of the fishermen from coastal areas and some urban areas of Luanda. Such answers were compiled in *Ana a Manda, Os Filhos da Rede*,²⁶⁹ which became his doctorate thesis in Anthropology. Apart from this, he investigated populations originally from the centre of Angola as well as pastoralist societies from the Southwest of Angola, known as Kuvale, Mucubals.

However, he is best known as a poet. He is considered to have been not only one of the most prominent Angolan poets but also one of the most important poets of the Portuguese language outside the mainland Portugal. He received the literary prize of "Casino da Póvoa" for publishing a variety of works ranging from culture, anthropology, cinematography to agriculture.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho went back to his homeland to study agriculture and graduated in 1960. Once in Angola, he worked as a farming agent, especially in the fields of coffee plantation. In 1964 he began to do sheep farming in the South of Angola abandoning it for nearly four years to settle first in Maputo and then in London, where he studied cinematography, as already mentioned. Concerning his return to Angola after his studies, he says:

I am not, however, and to be sure, telling the story from the start. When I was in fact embarked in Moçâmedes, I was also being sent to my precise biological birthplace and

²⁶⁸ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-biographical-ability-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2016.

²⁶⁹ Original title: *Ana a Manda – Les Enfants du Filet. Identité collective, créativité sociale et production de la différence culturelle – un cas muxiluanda*.

from where, earlier thus, I had come with family, migrating at the time, to arrive in Moçâmedes. What was there for me in life, anyway, was to be back in Angola with a finished diploma when most Angolan subjects in my age group with resources enough to study were being sent, in turn, to universities in Portugal and placed in the grounds of a turntable, given the times we were living in, conducive to their involvement in opportune dynamics of ideological clarification, political learning, militant guidance and euphoric, redemptive, and patriotic youth options for a direction in life.²⁷⁰

Later, he joined the Angolan Public Television (TPA), where he took on the job of film-producer, becoming a successful director as well. The first Angolan fiction movie to be ever shot was *Nelisita*²⁷¹ in 1982, then *Moia: o Recado da Ilha*. They were both filmed under his direction. According to Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, it was the cinematographic experience that led him to anthropology. As he puts it,

(...) Foi de alguma forma a poesia que me fez passar pelo cinema e que, por seu turno, foi a partir do cinema que me tornei antropólogo. Desse percurso e desse trânsito, exactamente, é que resulta a minha estreita e continuada relação com certas vozes locais de Angola e do Mundo que se exprimem segundo o regime da oralidade.²⁷²

After writing his first literary work *Chão de Oferta*, for which he was granted the 'Mota Veiga' prize, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho began a new literary enterprise. He started a challenge in which he often mixed different literary genres such as narratives with fiction, poetry with novels and literary criticism. He is believed to have wished to write a trilogy, which Achebe did. But, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho was often heard saying that such a trilogy would be a gruelling work to do because it would have required someone of great intellectual ability, which he felt he did not have at that time.

²⁷⁰ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-biographical-ability-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2016.

²⁷¹ "Ficção, Angola, 1982, 90' Realização e Argumento: Ruy Duarte de Carvalho; Fotografia: Victor Henriques; Produção: Laboratório Nacional de Cinema; Intérpretes: António Tyitenda, Francisco Munyele, Tyiapinga Primeira, Manuel Tyongorola, Ndyanka Liuíma. Seria também enquanto chamada de atenção para os "outros" que *Nelisita* se torna uma prioridade na realização. O argumento foi estruturado a partir de duas peças da literatura oral das populações Nyaneka do Sudoeste de Angola, segundo narrações de Constantino Tykwa e Valentim, fixadas por Carlos Estermann, no livro *Cinquenta contos bantu do Sudoeste de Angola* (1971). A partir destas narrativas do povo Nyaneka, o autor cria uma ficção onde os elementos da comunidade atuam encenando as próprias lendas, compondo duas camadas da história: a do *Nelisita* e a dos que vão ao armazém dos espíritos." <http://www.redeangola.info/especiais/nelisita-e-o-cinema-etnografico/> accessed on February 2nd, 2016, 15: 30.

²⁷² Transcription from the talk of the author that took place in the workshop *Travessia da Oralidade/Veredas da Modernidade*, that took place at USP (University of São Paulo) in May 2004.

I presume that this trilogy contains works like *Os Papéis do Inglês* and *Paisagens Propícias* and *A Terceira Metade*. In fact, this plan was accomplished. Besides, I think that ability was never a problem for Ruy Duarte de Carvalho as his literary legacy is unquestionably proven. He writes in his autobiography that

At least two major consequences for my biographical past were the outcome of this configuration of things: the first is that the place where I came to the world always constituted for me, since I remember ruminating on things, a reference of exile; the second is that everything that throughout my life was being revealed and determined as place in the world, always struck in an immediate manner, lived, empirical, in vivo, demanding, at times, and without having mine or whatever or whomever's hand on it, options and actions of life or death in the course of events. Elaborations and ruminations, theory helping, nearly always came afterwards. I don't recall having come to the world, evidently, but to compensate I do remember well having changed entirely, both soul and skin, half a dozen times throughout life. That there was a geographical matrix and existential framing that was mine, I took notice when I was about 12 years old while eating bread and over a hiccup attack in the middle of the desert of Moçâmedes, by the Azevedo summit. It continually comes to mind whenever I happen to pass by and maybe that is why I'm always trying to see if I pass by there.²⁷³

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho loved Angola and his work as an anthropologist, though he preferred to be seen more as a writer and a poet rather than as an anthropologist. For him, one of the jobs of the anthropologists was to do social critique and he, on the contrary, wrote about culture and people, because of the natural passion he felt for them and not merely for scientific reasons. While, for instance, the social scientists include notes in the form of footnotes, he preferred placing them within the text itself, often leaving aside the conventions of the scientific methodology. His great love for Angola is expressed in the following way:

Today I still can't manage being for long out there without returning to the nocturnal murmur of Luanda that arises from the back of my house in Maianga, and without hopping down south every now and then to visit shepherds. And I believe, having arrived at this point in life, that I can't stop wanting to understand that the world, all over and not just here, conspires and produces utilizing always, or almost always, the

²⁷³ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-biographical-ability-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> retrieved in 2016.

use and abuse of others' good faith. I'm afraid I will never be able, even oldish, to resign to this and become the subject well done, dissimulated, pirate, adaptable and finally adapted, that never, throughout my entire life, have I managed to be.²⁷⁴

Recently, the 'Associação Cultural e Recreativa Angolana Chá de Caxinde' (Angolan Association for Entertainment and Culture) published a book on behalf of Ruy Duarte de Carvalho entitled *O Que Ficou Por Dizer*, with texts and interventions by him, some of which had never been published before, to mark the anniversary of his birthdate as well as to honour his death and literary legacy. Although this fact comes to testify once again that Carvalho's works are to some extent unknown, this initiative, however, should be encouraged increasingly for the future generations.

It is unquestionable that his literary legacy has not been sufficiently explored and studied and that plenty of work is needed in order to find out what he left for the Angolan literary canon. This thesis is one among few studies already done about him. I hope that many more will follow.

In the final years before his death, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho lived by himself and by option in Namibia, a kind of self-imposed seclusion, in which painting and writing were his favourite hobbies. Unfortunately, he was unexpectedly found dead in his apartment, in the region of Swakopmund, in August 2010. All in all, I believe that his literary legacy will live on and be appreciated for many more years to come. Marta Lança testifies to it by saying that

The life of Ruy Duarte de Carvalho is intrinsically linked to Angola, where he researched and wrote many pages about the kuvale people and their forms of organization when staying in the Namibe Desert. He had an analytical look at the thought of the world's Westernization and the implications of the war (and the various ways to see Angola, inside and out). He was a lover of the wilderness that followed the San Francisco River, the territories of Guimarães Rosa and Euclides da Cunha, Brazil, which we can read in *Desmedida*.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-biographical-ability-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> retrieved in 2016.

²⁷⁵ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/travel-with-the-writer-and-movie-maker-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> retrieved in 2016.

4. 3. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's Literary Works

Carvalho published more than twenty literary works, including poetry, novels, and narratives as well as chronicles. At this point, I review and analyse some of these relevant works which is more representative of what I will elaborate on.

Here are the most important literary productions of Carvalho: *Chão de Oferta* (1972); *A Decisão da Idade* (1976); *Como se o Mundo não tivesse Leste* (1977); *Exercícios de Crueldade* (1978); *Sinais Misteriosos* (1980); *Ondula, Savana Branca* (1982); *Lavra Paralela* (1987); *Hábito da Terra* (1988); *Memória de Tanta Guerra* (1992); *Ordem de Esquecimento* (1997); *A Câmara, a Escrita e a Coisa Dita – Fitas, Textos e Palestras* (1997); *Aviso à Navegação – olhar sucinto e preliminar sobre os pastores Kuvale* (1997); *Vou lá visitar Pastores* (1999); *Desmedida* (2007); *Observação Directa* (2000); *Os Papéis do Inglês* (2000); *Actas da Maianga* (2003); *Crónicas do Brasil* (2007); *Lavra, Poesia Reunida 1970-2000* (2005); *As Paisagens Propícias* (2005); *A Terceira Metade* (2009).

Starting with *Chão de Oferta*, 1972, I would say that this anthology inaugurates Ruy de Carvalho's literary career. It is a collection of poetry. A full version is found in *A Decisão da Idade* written in 1976. This book is composed of three parts, "Chão de Oferta", "Tempo de ausência", "Noção Geográfica". It drives us back to exotic landscapes, filled with trees, castles, waterholes, grass, where the dryness of the desert opposes the fecundity of lands.

It is this fecundity that imposes itself against everything, in a poetry trying to recover the admiration and respect lost in relation to nature. It has nothing to do with making up reality metaphorically or reflecting the praise of nature in a sentimental way. It is rather concerned with turning back and looking at it with the rigorousness of those who depend on it to survive. This gaze is also political and ecological; political in the sense that it moves the person's position away from the world, and ecological in the sense that it respects Mother Nature. As Ruy de Carvalho says,

Um homem vem fundir geografias, polarizar as forças da manhã deserta, vem fecundar as latitudes nuas e violar segredos de falésias. Um homem vem, destrói a derradeira protecção da lenda, transita triunfante a bruma do silêncio, afaga, da idade, o corpo descuidado, revolve-se na febre, despoja-se de si e oferece o peito.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Chão de Oferta*. Luanda: Cuturang, 1972, p. 69.

In the last part of the book, the word “force” is used. This force is of fertility, the one that brings rain to earth; of struggle, struggle for survival, which is like the struggle of the flower which waits patiently for the drop of water in order to emerge. One might compare the person through the body’s cycles, with this condition of nature, given that the person is at the same time an integral and a minor part of the surrounding world, both conditioning and conditioned by it. In the poem “Noção geográfica”, this condition is very obvious in the woman’s talk:

Não são as minhas mãos mas tenho mãos. / E não as cito aqui para inventar palavras
/ por dentro das palavras / e procurar falar das mãos das coisas / onde as palavras mal
adregam ser. / Eu falo destes meus dez dedos negros / com que amasso o estrume /
e dou notícia à chuva de que estou atenta / e dou vazão à força da semente / que por
mim desliza / para ascender seu fruto às minhas mãos / no tempo repetido das
colheitas. / Cito os meus dedos para invocar a cor / da terra que pisais e donde apenas
/ conheceis o fruto já maduro / que estas mãos ofertam / pousado nos dez dedos que
o criaram. / As mesmas rugas que a semente vence / ao deslizar para a terra por meus
braços / são as que vós tocais ao tactear / as minhas mãos em busca de alimento /
nestes dez dedos para vós abertos.²⁷⁷

There is something in this language which attracts. A reader feels invited to its combined simplicity and profundity. In contrast to what happens in the works written by most African poets, this poetry is *sui generis*. So, the exotic side of the words and rhythms it contains should not be ignored. This exotic side, which is generally absent from most of African poems, turns into some kind of “tellurium” in which Ruy Duarte de Carvalho intended to please enormously, although appearing distant and absent from it.

In this sense, it is a poetry of resistance, i.e., from resistance to defeat in the battle of human beings against change and from resistance to the unavoidable fading of tradition. It reminds us in a nostalgic way that the world is constantly changing. It is moving towards unknown and uncertain territories. This uncertainty sometimes brings renewal and sometimes brings unbearable chaos. For me, this book should be considered as of distinctive category in the African literature written in Portuguese language because of this realistic outlook it brings.

Como se o Mundo não tivesse Leste (1977). This book is composed of three short texts of fiction situated in the last phase of the colonial period. It reveals that the author is present in the

²⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 73.

domains of some kind of “self-fiction” which is retaken later in *Os Papéis do Inglês*. Although in this book this theme is dealt with in a brief way, in some other books written in prose (*Vou Lá Visitar Pastores*, for example) Ruy de Carvalho returns to it in more detail.

The invention of a new territory-nation occupies his mind in that self-fiction. He seems to show that it was only by a collective imagination that this invention would become not only politically real but also extensively geographical. He saw the Kuvale people as an example of this collective imagination since they were able to recover from the war waged against them and rebuild their territory after the deportation of 1940 and 1941. I will address it in the next chapter.

Os Papéis do Inglês (2000) is Carvalho’s second long fictional narrative. Although, this work is predominantly narrative, this differentiation, however, is quite relative since Carvalho’s own characteristic is not of making a distinction of genres. He constantly reinvented literary genres, by combining poetry, fiction and history. It maintains the relation between memory, work and experience. It is certainly this discursive mobility that gives this writing a deep literary coherence. In a nutshell, this book incorporates several languages and discourses, combining literature, anthropology and history all together.²⁷⁸

It is written in the first person, telling a story of violence, passion and greed. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho used traditional storytelling techniques to write it. The story takes place within a country in an ongoing crisis. The characters live and consume as if they are living the last days of their lives. It is an authentic expression of globalization.

From a semantic perspective, the prose explores the richness of the Angolan Portuguese vocabulary. It discusses not only the limits of a person in any hostile environment, but also the possibility of creating a new fictional language. It is this fictional language that appears to redeem the disappointments of a university professor. He, therefore, travels to Africa to investigate the suicide of an elephants’ hunter.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho creates here a story of a writer who is present in the text but not clearly identified. He tells the story of this character, an English hunter who gives himself up to the Portuguese authorities after killing his Greek co-worker at the banks of river Kwando near the border

²⁷⁸ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Os Papéis do Inglês*. Lisboa: Livros Cotovia, 2000.

with Zambia in 1923. But they do not listen to him. So, he returns to his camp and kills everything he sees and ends up shooting himself on the chest.

Although this fiction is informed by anthropology, unlike most of his previous books, characterized by observations, reflections and tradition, this time, it is possible to see a real fiction. What is curious to notice is the introduction in the narrative of new words like e-mails. For Mega Ferreira, for example, the e-mails can be considered as the “crutches”²⁷⁹ of the narrative, therefore, a tool of globalization. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho shows here that he was aware of the semantic changes which can take place in any language when it clashes with another. Bernardo Carvalho, himself a novelist, quoting Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, stated that

Trata-se de uma narrativa em permanente suspeita perante si mesma, a questionar-se, interrompendo-se para revelar, por um processo análogo ao relativismo antropológico. E quem narra não há de ter, ele também, que dar-se a contar?²⁸⁰

Actas da Maianga (2003) also characterized by a mixed discourse, therefore, difficult to classify, are inscriptions of a travelling diary blended with a deep incursion in the Angolan contemporary life broadly knitted together. In these texts, I perceive a will to articulate knowledge. This can allow to find explanations for the frames within which the Angolan realities are situated and, simultaneously, allow to reflect upon its contemporary problems.

As for literature, the book begins with poetry, but it is a narrative. It is important not to overlook that the question of genre is given a particular discourse. From the beginning of the book, the breaking of boundaries is encouraged, which drives Luís Quintais to make a sensitive observation:

(...) o fascínio pela fronteira (a fronteira entre Angola e Namíbia), a fronteira entre desertos, o Namibe e o Kalahari, as fronteiras entre gêneros, poesia, ensaio, travelogue). A fronteira (e a hibridização que ela convoca) não é apenas algo que pode ser remetido para o facto de estarmos perante um escritor que faz apelo a lógica de constituição do mundo, diferenciadas e, em inúmeros aspectos, fortemente contrastadas. A fronteira é algo que faz parte do tecido de experiência.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ “Crutches” here are meant as new lexis that Ruy de Carvalho brings to this narrative. It is a neologism.

²⁸⁰ Bernardo Carvalho, “A Ficção Hesitante”, in *Jornal Folha de São Paulo*, São Paulo: Sábado, 06 de Janeiro de 2001.

²⁸¹ Luís Quintais, “O olhar do rinoceronte – ou o Ruy como eu o vejo” in *Sete palcos* n. 05. Coimbra: Cena Lusófona (Julho de 2006), p. 18.

Ondula, Savana Branca (1982) translates and incorporates African oral tradition, logic and rhythm, and it also projects, in an inventive way, a dialogue between procedures characterized by repetitions and parallelisms, which are the basis of oral expression. Conceptions, modernity and political commentary are also included.

Desmedida (2000) is divided in two big segments, called first half and second half (in a balanced composition which does justice to the names), and the closing. Each one of these halves is divided in three pieces, which, in turn, are subdivided in what might be considered as subchapters. In the second half, two-thirds are dedicated to Angola, which is the main topic. The external structure of the book shows how the author values the presentation of incursions and crossings of different kinds; physical and textual.

Despite the fact that it is not ethnography, it does not mean that this narrative rejects the idea of understanding this territory, particularly diversified. It involves decoding and analysis of distinct lifestyles in both hemispheres of the planet.

In fact, this literary, historic and anthropological text resonates travel literature.

Thus, how can Ruy Duarte de Carvalho be positioned in the Angolan literary canon?

4. 4. Position in the Angolan Literary Canon

As mentioned earlier, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho is best known as a poet and a film director in the Angolan culture and literature. However, his literary personality can match different classifications. He is not only a poet and a film director, but also an ethnographer, an anthropologist, a visual artist and a novelist.

This classification makes him a hybrid and pluralist individual. He was someone with a complex personality to describe and entirely committed to literary activities. As he said, “foi de alguma forma a poesia que me fez passar pelo cinema e foi a partir do cinema que me tornei antropólogo.”²⁸² He shows here his journey as a writer, which is some kind of spiral of self-conscience, extremely productive and valuable. He was simultaneously a rare African figure of the 20th century and showed deep concern about the political and economic circumstances of Angola.

²⁸² Rita Chaves, “Literatura e identidade (s): algum percurso de Ruy Duarte de Carvalho.” In *VIII Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais*, 2004. <http://www.ces.uc.pt/lab2004/inscricao/pdfs/painel35/RitaChaves.pdf>, p. 3 (last accessed, 26/06/2012).

His literary production reworks important fields and questions in a powerful and personal way, i.e., discursive fields and conceptual questions, in order to reevaluate what actually means to be a writer in the Lusophone countries. Some of these Lusophone countries are still characterized by social problems, including historical relations marked with political turmoil.

Narratives like *Vou Lá Visitar Pastores* (1999), *Os Papéis do Inglês*, (2000), the Brazilian chronicles *Desmedida* (2003), the short essays of *Actas da Maianga*, (2003) and the outstanding poetry in *Lavra* (a compilation of his poetry from 1970 to 2000) are evidences of this diversified production.

His writings confront the contemporary world. His awareness of territorial boundaries can be seen as an example of the combination of literature and anthropology. They can also be considered as an alternative to much of the jargons swamping many academic articles.

I notice the gravitation of themes and motifs, which come controlled with a discursive power, outdo the “modisms” and “academisms.” As for authorships and authority in his works, Miguel Vale de Almeida, Portuguese anthropologist, concluded that the presence of authorship – stripped of any authority from any literary or anthropological hyper definition – is, in the end, what frames the expression of literature and anthropology in Ruy Duarte de Carvalho.²⁸³

It is on this point that I wish to dwell on for some time, in order to reflect on certain discursive practices present in Ruy Duarte de Carvalho’s writings. I think that his writings demonstrate a mobile process of subjectivities. This subjectivity proves its complexity and it is sometimes relegated to a second plan and other times completely ignored in the field of literary and cultural studies in Portuguese language.

As far as subjectivity is concerned, I can say that he engaged directly in the discursive writing. The way he positions himself in the discourse he produces, makes him a full-fledged writer whenever he engaged in cultural relations or oppose the dominant socio-cultural rhetoric.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho produced his own writing strategies to create a multi-layered plot of meanings in order to be able to communicate with his public.

²⁸³ See Miguel Vale de Almeida, “Antropologia e Literatura: a propósito e por causa de Ruy Duarte de Carvalho” in *Jornal do Ciclo Ruy Duarte de Carvalho*, CCB, (Fevereiro de 2008).

Nevertheless, he appears not to forget to discuss the obstacles to the post-independent Angolan society. Whether his location as a writer for social matters is relevant or not, the most significant remark, however, is that Ruy Duarte de Carvalho is present in the space of cultural representations of Angolan society. He chooses literature as a way to engage in it.

So, as a subject of action, his writings become a powerful instrument through which he creates news themes, ways and forms of positioning himself and the other in the social stratification. He creates a specific authorship space for himself while studying the relations of power in his society and the issue of national identity, fruit of his vast experience in the field. His particular ethnography was a tool for achieving a permanent multi-layered relation with his readers.

In an interview with Nuno Vidal about the problems involved in the construction of the nation and national identity in Angola, where various ethnic groups must live side by side, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho says that

A identidade nacional está em curso. As identidades étnicas e regionais exercem-se, porque Angola conheceu um processo de encapsulação geral. Todas as sociedades, mais ou menos rurais e mesmo algumas urbanas, para sobreviver tiveram que contar com os seus próprios recursos, não chegava lá nada, nem abastecimento exterior nem vias de escoamento do que lá se produzia. Tiveram que se organizar a partir dos seus próprios recursos. Dado que estas sociedades não são completamente autossuficientes, como é o caso dos pastores, que nunca produzem cereais em abundância, articularam-se com populações vizinhas para troca de gado por cereais. Portanto, em certa medida reconstituem-se circuitos de compensação, que nalguns casos até poderão corresponder a configurações pré-coloniais. É aí que as identidades étnicas voltam a jogar o seu papel, têm de jogar o seu papel. Portanto, eu julgo que há um processo de reafirmação das identidades étnicas sempre que isso constitui um argumento, um instrumento de sobrevivência.²⁸⁴

In fact, the Angolan nation is still being constructed. New cultural and ideological representations are being diffused across the country. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho believed that the construction of national identity is a slow and difficult process due to the particularities of the

²⁸⁴<http://www.buala.org/pt/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-construcao-da-nacao-e-a-consciencia-nacional-entrevista-a-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2015.

Angolan history and cultural diversity. However, small ethnic groups such as the Kuvale shepherds cannot be intentionally ignored in this process of nation building. Each ethnic group must play a role in constructing new national representations so that they may feel represented and heard.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho seems to show that writing was for him a way of trying to participate in the construction of this young nation-state and how various political forces competed with one another for political power. In relation to the Kuvale involvement with the MPLA (The Political Movement for Liberation of Angola) in this fierce competition, he writes:

Para a articulação entre os Kuvale e o Mpla teria havido acerto de cativação e captivação e envolvimento políticos por parte de activistas do movimento, sem dúvida. Já escrevi sobre o assunto aquilo que tinha a dizer a esse respeito e se ainda não leste poderás fazê-lo quando te apetecer. Em meu entender houve razões menos imediatas para o fenómeno, razões que, embora accionadas pelo presente então em curso, iam no entanto nutrir-se de uma substância histórica que pouco ou nada tinha a ver com a luta de libertação e não era de molde a suscitar o embaraço de quaisquer opções políticas. Talvez não se tratasse exactamente de uma adesão ao Mpla mas antes de uma aliança com o Mpla contra outras forças em presença, a qual por sua vez, e talvez também, fosse beber a uma história mais profunda, a da própria formação do grupo Kuvale como ele é hoje. É por aí talvez possa entender-se de que forma uma pequena sociedade como esta passa assim a ver-se implicada na disputa interna pelo poder num jovem Estado confrontado com a sua própria fragilidade...²⁸⁵

In this sense, for him, writing becomes a powerful means of subjectivation and activation of power relation in most societies. Writing can interfere in the way power is perceived or used. Also, from this perspective, a writer is believed to be a fundamental social subject and his presence does not end simply in the literary field. His or her works represent and reflect back society, the object of his or her literary activity. I think that is what Carvalho seems to have fully achieved with his writings and his canonical status should consequently happen.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho inaugurated a new form of literary positioning. Such a form reshapes ethnography not only as a literary resource but also as tool of discussion and of intervention in the space of public discourses and 'rhetorics'. He discusses forms of positioning in relation to language and the cultural and historical 'imaginary' in the Portuguese language and culture. That includes its

²⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 31 – 34.

life, obstacles, potentials, convergent and divergent aspects and its specificities. Thus, I can assume that there is great diversity in his work.

As for the way Carvalho composes his texts. Two essential aspects can be identified: one has to do with the representation of space; and, in this context, I have acknowledged his way of presenting the South of Angola; and the other is the prominent place given to the community of shepherds and the mobility which embodies space and time. As stated by Osvaldo Silvestre:

As figuras da circularidade e do retorno parecem, nesta perspectiva, ser o necessário correlato metodológico de uma natureza laboriosa mas lenta, germinado em momentos de fulguração imprevisível e, em vigor, indescritível. A natureza, digamo-lo assim, impõe a Ruy Duarte de Carvalho a sua *longue durée*. E esta versão da natureza como *longue durée* arrasta consigo uma versão do método, sendo por isso como que uma matriz e a mais perfeita alegoria da obra de Ruy Duarte de Carvalho. A obsessão com o espaço resiste contudo – e essa é uma das suas mais fortes dimensões políticas – às figuras da fixação ou da radicação. Não por acaso, os espaços privilegiados na obra de Ruy Duarte de Carvalho são habitados por povoações nómadas, o que torna ainda mais denso o nó que articula espaço, temporalidade e sujeito. A transumância arrasta, na obra de Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, uma temporalização do espaço e dramatiza interminantemente o papel epistemológico do sujeito, que tenta conhecer em trânsito, o espaço. Assim, o espaço como a geografia, torna-se noção e proposta.²⁸⁶

Silvestre's argument is a depiction of the way Carvalho composes his texts and themes. He does not see himself as a messenger of hope to the spaces he describes, but simply part of it. He is someone concerned with describing landscapes, recording cultural facts and artefacts and inventing new forms to fit everything in that depiction of these spaces. So, he must appeal to memory and informants, his privileged instruments, most of the time,

By opposing the conventional representations implicated in the colonial relations, his narrative and poetry offer a more realistic depiction of Africa, of Angola and the Kuvale than any other that we know of. That is one of the reasons why his works cannot be excluded from the Angolan literary canon in construction. Marta Lança wrote the following comment about him and his works:

²⁸⁶ Osvaldo Silvestre, "Notas sobre a paisagem e o tempo em Ruy Duarte de Carvalho" in *Sete palcos* n. 05, Coimbra: Cena Lusófona, julho de 2006, p. 26.

In the last few years, already retired, he lived in Swakopmund, in Namibia, persisting in not giving to perks of any kind. As was his wish, he was cremated after his death and his ashes were buried in the desert of Namibia, in Angola, in a place of his choice. All we have left is his magnanimous work, which leaves so much for decoding, which points out paths, brings to light people, lifestyles, communities, authors, people who came across him somewhere in an exploratory path, and even words and expressions – scholarship and colloquialism together in a single phrase! A work of great originality and talent that makes it clear that Ruy Duarte de Carvalho is one of the best Portuguese (Angolan, my emphasis) writers and, therefore will remain firmly in the canon of Angolan and Lusophone literature. His life and work are an example of rare brilliance and consistency!²⁸⁷

I could not agree more with Marta Lança. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho is in fact one of the best Angolan writers. He actually saw himself as Angolan and not as Portuguese despite being born in Portugal. In his biography he attests to his love for Angola by saying that,

Then, from 75 to 81, I made films for the Angolan television and the Angolan Institute of Cinema, and went around for a while very entertained filming all over Angola and thinking that my peculiar idea of making Angola known to the very Angolans, my countrymen, would be well received.²⁸⁸

He calls the Angolans his countrymen and makes Angola “known to the very Angolans”. I think that he must remain firmly in the canon of Angolan and Lusophone literatures, and why not in the international canon? His *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* is certainly one example of this “magnanimous work”, a work of great originality and talent, “which still leaves so much for decoding,” as said by Marta Lança. This study is an attempt to decode it both using anthropological and literary resources and to bring “to light people, lifestyles, communities, authors, people who came across him

²⁸⁷<http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/travel-with-the-writer-and-movie-maker-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> last access in 2016.

Marta Lança adds that “before leaving this world, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho has begun a journey of 6,000 miles through South Africa in 13 days, from Johannesburg to Johannesburg, from the interior to the coast by the other coast. A trip alert to the history of the country’s various expansions and colonization, which could be the origin of the book *As Paisagens Efêmeras*, Atas de Santa Helena and a possible movie. Camoes Institute sponsored it as part of a project to discuss the Westernization of the world and its effects. Which relations between Europeans and local people have dictated the course of History? Which events triggered it?”

²⁸⁸ <http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/a-biographical-ability-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> last accessed in 2016.

somewhere in an exploratory path, and even words and expressions – scholarship and colloquialism together in a single phrase.”²⁸⁹

The section that follows is only a small introduction to main thematic lines of *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*. A more detailed discussion can be found in chapters five and six.

4. 5. *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*

Vou lá visitar Pastores is a text in which Carvalho documented the wisdom and oral tradition of the Kuvale people. He planned extended visit to the Southwest of Angola to study them closely. In doing so, he recorded anthropological as well as linguistic data about these people. This way, he was able to reveal some of their hidden cultural realities still not known by the general public.

With this text, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho appears to support the claim that popular wisdom can be reconstructed and translated. I think this was certainly his contribution to the ongoing debate about many issues raised in ethnography and literature. I also think that orality, literacy, tradition as well as modernity are some of these issues.

4. 5. 1. Historical and Literary Contexts

Vou lá visitar Pastores was written after most of the African independence wars were already over and it focuses on the Southwest of Angola.

It was written twenty-four years after the Angolan Independence Day and it raises questions on ethnic unity and identity, which continue to be raised in Angola up to now. The question, however, is to know why ethnic issues raised by Carvalho could still be relevant twenty-four years after independence. This is significant. Ethnic issues are part of the Angolan social structure, although not openly discussed, particularly in urban areas, and could endanger peace and reconciliation if not solved in the coming years.

The stories Carvalho tells about struggle and endurance during the colonial period show how the Kuvale resisted westernization and were able to preserve most of their local customs. The decision of the Angolan state was to change their nomadic life into a fixed one. This could have obstructed their traditional lifestyle.

²⁸⁹<http://www.buala.org/en/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/travel-with-the-writer-and-movie-maker-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2015.

Even with this political concern, Carvalho transcends all this to tell a story that defends the preservation of this ethnic group, a story that fits within the theoretical framework defended by post-colonial studies. As put by Maria C. da Silva:

(...) Em *Vou Lá Visitar Pastores*, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho transcende tudo isto e todos eles, turistas, viajantes, ficcionistas, jornalistas e etnógrafos de caderno em punho e diário no bolso. Ele consegue aqui o milagre de uma antropologia doce. Uma antropologia que sem qualquer ingenuidade, se reconhece e transcende recuperando formas discursivas que estiveram, afinal, na sua origem, para as impor em novo formato.²⁹⁰

Yet, the text is written “accidentally” when its author sets up a trip to the South of Angola in which he would be followed by a friend who was journalist. However, this friend did not arrive on time for the trip and was left behind in the hope of joining the author on the way. Fearing that, his friend would not probably meet him as expected he thought of recording audiotapes with useful information about the places to be visited. Quoting Rita Chaves:

[...] a obra nasceu de um acaso: em mais uma viagem ao sul do país, o autor seria acompanhado de um amigo jornalista que, entretanto atrasa-se e não pode vir com ele; a possibilidade de sua vinda leva o autor a gravar cassetes com dados que seriam úteis entre o amigo e esse universo a ser visitado.²⁹¹

Ruy Duarte’s main concern appears to be about rethinking the country’s mobility from where it was before, during and after colonization to where it is going, now that it is independent. Therefore, he invites his readers to join him in this adventure by challenging their old, cultural, political, social and economic views in the light of contemporary approaches concerning cultural diversity and mobility.

Thus, it becomes important for the readers to be aware of the biases and prejudices that could affect the way they see others and interact with them.

To understand the effort and courage demonstrated by this author to portray singularities of this group, it should be remembered that the country in question is rich and complex in terms of

²⁹⁰ Maria C. da Silva in *Jornal Público* 2000.

²⁹¹ Rita Chaves, “Literatura e identidade (s): algum percurso de Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, in *VIII Congresso Luso-Afro-Brasileiro de Ciências Sociais*, 2004, p. 6. <http://www.ces.uc.pt/lab2004/inscricao/pdfs/painel35/RitaChaves.pdf> last accessed 26/06/2012.

traditions. This complexity is confirmed in *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* by the author, but also adding the situation of endangered ethnic minorities.

This way he helps reconstruct and defend national identities which are constantly changing and being challenged. The text follows an anthropological approach to all this diversity hence unveiling perceptions and redefining them and reshaping them.

The author also tries to show the importance of the breeding of cows for the Kuvale which frames a type of social structure that defines kinship, the symbolism of fire in life, the relations with the sacred, the relevance of mobility in defining their individual and collective identities. So this way we can notably read about farming, culture, religion, mythology, fiction, sociology and politics in the text.

The message left behind for his friend journalist is also valuable for the western/westernized or non-western readers since it is about the fascination of travelling and meeting other people in search of cultural knowledge. As he says,

Vais viver situações novas e uma conveniente disponibilidade poderá colocar-te, se o permitires, não só perante o desconhecido que a prática dos outros te há-de revelar, mas também face àquele que a tua experiência e a tua sensibilidade vieram a colocar à consciência que é a tua, tributária ela mesma dos tempos e das idades que te tiver sido dado cumprir.²⁹²

This travel narrative is as much as about experiencing the direct contact with other cultures as it is about being informed following the field notes and documentation that are the result of that participant observation. Everybody is a part of this experience.

4. 5. 2. “Plots” and Themes

The internal structure of this text is highly interesting. Probably, there is not a single plot, but a multiple of them. That is the reason why the subtitle above presents the word plot in the plural and in inverted commas.

The text is divided in five parts. “Memórias e Colocações” is the first part; “Viagens, Encontros e Figuras” constitutes the second part, its objectives are to select, systematize, classify and reveal different logics, by sorting out a universe of perceptions, sentiments, and relations which define

²⁹² Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, p. 99.

different ways of existing in the world. “Etnografias e Torrentes” makes up the third part; “Decifrações e Desafios” is the fourth and finally, the “Post-scriptum, the Glossary and Illustrations” are the fifth part.

As already mentioned, the text seems to be written by “accident”, i.e., without a previously arranged plan. It is a result of a number of tapes recorded and transcribed, as told by the author, which were meant to be left behind and given to an English friend journalist, Filipe, who was supposed to meet the author on a fixed date and place, but he did not show up. Unexpectedly, the author was forced to keep a journal of all the places he visited and of all the Kuvale people he met as he was traveling, by recording and leaving behind several tapes for his friend. Since his friend never showed up as agreed on, the author decided finally to publish them in a book so that his friend could at least read those travel notes.

Vou lá Visitar Pastores is, therefore, a text with diverse and inspiring plots and themes. In summary, it addresses the importance given to cows by the people he meets, the structures which define the relations of kinship of these people, the symbolism and importance of fire in their lives, the relations with the sacred, the relevance of mobility in the cultural dynamism which constitutes their identity, the place which they ought to occupy in the construction of *Angolanidade*. This text raises the awareness for westerners or westernized or even the local readers, for whom everything might seem “new” in this context. And the warning is not only directed to Filipe, his friend, but also to all those late-coming researchers. For sure, this is ethnographically remarkable and should be valued. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho says.

(...) vai ser preciso até cumprir um caminho bem físico e bem concreto, quanto às suas referências, para que possas ver-te introduzido no quadro, no enquadramento desse presente que vais pretender identificar como o dos “outros” e acabará inevitavelmente, espero, por marcar também o teu. Vais viver situações novas e uma conveniente disponibilidade poderá colocar-te, se o permitires, não só perante o desconhecido que a prática dos outros te há-de revelar, mas também face àquele que a tua experiência e a tua sensibilidade vieram a colocar à consciência que é a tua, tributária ela mesma dos tempos e das idades que te tiver sido dado cumprir.²⁹³

²⁹³ Ibid, p. 99.

The absence of notes in the text does not mean that the bibliographic references were ignored. They are merged in the text. It is written in an epistolary form. The text incorporates contributions from scholars who serve as the foundation for the author's thinking. Their works are a valuable instrument for him so as to analyse the world which has become the object of his research.

Also, he uses other research material to compose this landscape of the South of Angola and its inhabitants. Works such as *Angola – Apontamentos sobre a Colonização dos planaltos e litoral do Sul de Angola* published by Agência Geral das Colónias, in Lisbon, 1940; *Os Nuer*, by Evans-Pritchard as well as *Pureza e perigo*, by Mary Douglas, are read for this purpose. There are also references in the text itself taken from Paul Auster and Gaston Bachelard. They are all part of this exploratory adventure.

The post-scriptum and the glossary open a possibility for the reader to search for significant data about this community of shepherds and so forth. There are other surprises hidden in this account, such as the formation of Angolan identities seen from different perspectives. The travels outside the Angolan capital is one of the essential characteristics of Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's works. They are not just physical travels but also cultural, linguistic and fictional. For a country which had its capital separated from the rest of the country for many years for a variety of reasons, this is a fine way to return to it and to challenge the comfort of the Angolan political elites or the middle class, who ignore most of the remote areas in the South. Consequently, he says

Há de facto em curso, na altura, um processo histórico muito evidente, alterações profundas nas sociedades em presença, não só com a intervenção directa europeia que temos estado a acompanhar, mas também com estas últimas expressões, talvez, de processos migratórios decorrentes de dinâmicas bem mais remotas e que transportaram as culturas pastoris do Leste africano até estas paragens e ao momento crítico de um embate que, também do decurso do séc. XIX, há-de dar-se mais abaixo na actual Namíbia, com outra cultura pastoril, proveniente esta do Sul, as dos chamados Hotentotes. Há, por outro lado, um processo de construções e de desconstruções identitárias, ou étnicas, se quiseres, ao sabor de acidentes, contingências, contiguidades territoriais, mas também de convivência, de estratégias, de interesses e de razões pragmáticas vividas pelos próprios sujeitos. E paralelo a ele decorre um processo de apelação desenvolvido da parte de quem os observa e identifica para o seu uso pessoal ou de grupo. Ambos estes processos se inscrevem, por sua vez, num outro processo mais amplo, da relação vital, aquele que dispõe no

tabuleiro do xadrez local a colocação, física e representacional, dos vizinhos, dos aliados, dos intrusos, dos estranhos, dos amigos e dos inimigos.²⁹⁴

I think that it is within the context of this related process that Ruy Duarte de Carvalho was trying to place all his findings about the Kuvale people, which can also help situate ourselves in the present of the Kuvale.

In mixing anthropology and literature, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho joins the anthropologists who raise in their texts questions about the limits of objectivity, the limits of impartiality in the collection of data about their nations and the limits of scientific methodology in the field-work, not to deny research as such, but to make it useful to its function of understanding and clarifying the worlds which are unfamiliar. The uncommon linguistic tools he uses are not only to season his style, but also to make it more consequent to the tasks he has set up.

As it happens with his other texts in which the creation of new genres is assumed, here the narrative is also formed by appealing to the imagination and by evoking the elements of oral tradition – one of the essential characteristics of these people I am studying. I observe that the themes chosen by the author impact the structure of the text and are supported by discourse and languages that go beyond the documental perspective. This text highlights the conceptions expressed in literature characterized by its linguistic plurality in close connection with the country, the continent and the community he studies. The farmer, the anthropologist, the cinematographer, the designer, the fictionist and the poet that Ruy Duarte de Carvalho was, are reflected in the text as well.

The comparative analyses of both peoples and cultures (Igbo and Kuvale) as described by Achebe and Carvalho in their texts and other authors come in the next chapters.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 45 – 6.

Chapter V: Comparative Approach to both Cultures and Peoples: Igbo and Kuvale

5. 1. Introduction

In this chapter Igbo and kuvale people will be compared culturally and their social representations will be identified. Their ethos and their cultural encodings, such as yam and cow considered. The objective of the chapter is to deconstruct or reconstruct these cultural encodings in order to understand and compare them. There is no understanding of culture without knowledge of its people and its narratives.

When reviewing post-colonial realities, discourse and cultural representations should be considered since cultures are not isolated entities but often fragile and unprotected territories. In a world more and more globalized, influences at many social levels are not completely avoidable, and they can easily turn into agents of deep cultural changes which can even bring about social instability.

Edward Said thoroughly demonstrated this phenomenon in his *Culture and Imperialism*, where, among other things, he examined Western cultures and the roots of European imperialist cultures and conflicts. He analysed them from Jane Austen's perspective to Salman Rushdie's, from Yeats to the media coverage of the Gulf Wars. It should not be forgotten that *Culture and Imperialism* came after his profoundly influential study on *Orientalism*, which studies the violent encounter between Eastern and Western civilizations.

My contact with Kuvale and Igbo peoples dates back to the years 1999 and 2000, when I was living in Lubango, Angola and Dublin, Ireland. My interest in these peoples has continued to grow ever since. I met the Kuvale in the regions of Munhino, Serra da Chela, Hoke and Serra da Neve, regions of Lubango and Namibe, Angola. I travelled to Namibe several times on religious missions and while there I had the opportunity to see and often talk with many of these people.

However, as for the Igbo people, I did not meet them in Nigeria, instead I found many of them in the Republic of Ireland and the UK as well as France where I was studying. During that time, I came across huge Igbo communities spread across the UK and France, some were Igbo descendents and other asylum-seekers. But, most of them were migrants.

Having lived in the Republic of Ireland from 2000 to 2005, specifically studying English and French languages, Anthropology and Theology, I managed to get acquainted with many of these Nigerian citizens. Some were my classmates and others were my acquaintances. As well, my knowledge of these two peoples was more deeply acquired, strongly challenged and particularly

enriched with reading the texts *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* and *Things Fall Apart*, two inspiring and eloquent accounts of Kuvale and Igbo peoples and cultures. Additionally, many more critics were consulted to enrich this comparative study. What convergent and divergent aspects are possible to find?

So this chapter is the fruit of my experiences and readings reflected upon and interpreted in the light of literary and cultural theories.

5. 2. Kuvale's and Igbo's social ethos/representations under perspective: (de) constructing Myths, (re) constructing linguistic and cultural identities

In order to understand and compare the Igbo and Kuvale peoples, it is essential to identify them, their social ethos and their representations; to know how these representations can inspire the construction of their reality, myths, linguistic and cultural identities; to question if these representations can be epistemologically compared and universalized; and, accordingly, to identify their social models and how these social models can inspire contemporary ones.

I will dwell on these four objectives. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho,²⁹⁵ Chinua Achebe,²⁹⁶ Ali Vincent Egwu,²⁹⁷ Chima J. Korieh,²⁹⁸ Chukwuma Okoye,²⁹⁹ Osita Ezeliora³⁰⁰ and Victor Uchendu,³⁰¹ just to mention a few, will help me deconstruct the Kuvale's and Igbo's social ethos and representations.

I introduce this discussion with the following claim: ethnic groups should never be underestimated on the basis of their geographic location size or social representativeness since, in spite of this, they can turn into sources of cultural wisdom and social inspiration to all other cultures.

²⁹⁵ Carvalho's books such as *Vou lá visitar Pastores; Aviso à Navegação – olhar sucinto e preliminar sobre os pastores Kuvale; Os Kuvale na História, nas Guerras e nas Crises*.

²⁹⁶ Most of Achebe's books are authentic cultural studies of Igbo people and Culture. Therefore, some of them will be consulted for this study.

²⁹⁷ See Ali Vincent Egwu, "Change and Continuity in Igbo: Pottery forms and Ideas," in *Ceramics Technical*, No. 37, 2013, pp. 11 – 15.

²⁹⁸ See Chima J. Korieh, "Yam is King! But Cassava is the Mother of all Crops: Farming, Culture and Identity in Igbo Agrarian Economy," in *Dialectical Economy*, Spring 2007, pp. 221 – 232.

²⁹⁹ See Chukwuma Okoye, "Cannibalization as Popular Tradition in Igbo Masquerade Performance, in *Research in African Literature*, Vol. 41, No.2, summer 2010, pp. 21 – 31.

³⁰⁰ See Osita Azeliora, "Colonial Discourse, Poetic Language and the Igbo masquerading Culture in Ezenwa-Ohaeto's the Voice of the Night Masquerade," in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, June 2009, pp. 43 – 63.

³⁰¹ See Victor C. Uchendu, "Ezi Na Ulo: The Extended Family in Igbo Civilization," in *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 32, springer 2007, pp. 167 – 219.

Additionally, they can also become the basis for political turmoil and for far-reaching social insecurity that could disturb all other peoples or cultures. So, I think there is great ethnographic and anthropological value in studying, understanding and comparing small groups such as these ones.

By reading Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, I realized that this claim is accurate.

5. 2. 1. The Kuvale World: land, language, culture and social practices

Starting with the Kuvale, these people are nomadic shepherds, found precisely in one of the most ethnically preserved provinces of Angola, called Namibe (also known in the past as Moçamedes). This region has a huge desert and a long beautiful maritime coast. In its hinterlands, it is possible to find green valleys such as Bero and Giraul, with rivers rich in water and fish.

Apart from the Kuvale shepherds, we also find the *Kwesi*, the *Kimbares* or *Tyimbare*.³⁰² Ruy Duarte de Carvalho describes these cultural and geographic diversities as follows.

Hei-de mostrar-te depois um mapa dos terrenos que vais explorar. Corresponde a uma vista aérea que abrangeria todo o território kuvale. Desenhei-o assim porque foi essa a imagem que colhi um dia, ou retive, a voar a baixa altitude do Namibe para Luanda. Vinha distraído e quando espreitei pela janela do pequeno avião já se alcançava a Serra da Neve, a *muhunda* do *Wambo*. Olhei primeiro para a distância onde se recortava a serra da Chela com os promontórios que tem da Bibala ao Bruco, e ao Hoke cá de baixo e, já meio confundido com a bruma, o do Cahinde, e daí depois sempre a rodar para a direita e par trás até ver Moçâmedes e adivinhar o Kuroka e Porto Alexandre à retaguarda. Tinha aberto, à frente e exposto, o teatro da minha aplicação. Fui reconhecendo, do ar, debruçado sobre o painel da paisagem, os lugares onde acampeei, desde lá longe, no Maihawa, no Virei, na Muhunda e no Candi, mais longe ainda, Pediva e Yona, até mesmo ali por debaixo de mim, na posição em que agora estava, a Mahandya e o Xingo, a norte da zona. Abrangia assim, numa panorâmica, os núcleos de concentração kuvale e das suas periferias, zonas de transição com territórios *tyilengue*, *mwila*, *gambwe*, *himba*, urbano. A Namíbia a sul e à volta a Angola restante. O sentido da colocação geográfica, pois, para fazer sentido.³⁰³

³⁰² This particular group is not an ethnic group as such but a sociological category as Ruy Duarte proposes.

³⁰³ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, p. 15.

These cultural and geographical notes were taken while flying over this territory. According to Carvalho, this zone is the Kuvale preferred location.

The category *Kimbares*, mentioned above, was a name applied to all those who adopted the Western lifestyle in terms of material, social or economic lifestyle. This lifestyle was seen as something which fitted in what I would call as the 'black bourgeoisie' of the region. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho explains why the *Kimabares* were seen this way.

Mas em toda a Angola e durante os séculos em que a expansão portuguesa ganhou terreno, a categoria de *Kimbares* foi-se aplicando a todos os que adoptavam o modelo ocidental de cultura material e de prática económica e, de alguma forma, social. Depois o processo de ocidentalização, ou de integração num modelo tornado universal, foi-se tornando inexorável por toda a parte e é por isso que nos dias de hoje, em meu entender, a imputação perde o sentido... Mas aqui, de facto continua a falar-se de *Kimbares* e de *Tyimbari* e, muito provavelmente, no que toca ao uso urbano da designação, porque à reprodução da categoria antiga correspondem em grande medida às elites locais do presente, inquestionáveis "patrícios" do lugar.³⁰⁴

Namibe has always been a place of multiple identitary affirmations. Apart from the *Kuvale*, the *Kwisi*, the *Tyimbari* and the *Kimbares*, we also find the descendants of Portuguese settlers, the Brazilian traders from Pernambuco, who fixed themselves in the Southeast of Namibe in 1849 and 1850 due to the nationalist turmoil experienced in Brazil. This turmoil was known in the Brazilian history as the 'Revolta Praieira', which ended up with the persecution and expulsion of those involved.³⁰⁵

In fact, the history of the *Kimbares* is linked to the history of these Brazilian traders.³⁰⁶ Agriculture was the main activity practiced by these *Kimbares* on the coasts of the valleys stretching from Bentiaba to Kuroca, passing through Carunjamba, Giraul, and Bumbo as far as Bero.

The Kuvale people are described as physically tall and usually not dressed in a fashionable way. Both men and women wear small pieces of cloth in front and on the back, sandals made of leather or rubber. The women usually have the breasts uncovered except when it is extremely cold. In such situations, they might wear long clothes to protect themselves from the cold. In visiting

³⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 18.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 19.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 19.

neighbouring cities, such as Benguela, Lubango, Cunene and Huambo, mostly for commercial reasons, they likewise wear those long cloths perhaps for realizing that they are in foreign territories and need to cover their semi-naked bodies. This is attested by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho in the following terms.

É gente que facilmente reconhecerás pelo porte e pelo atavio. Tanto homens como mulheres usam um pano à frente e outro atrás, e sandálias de couro ou, e mais recentemente, de pneu, no caso dos homens... Os homens sobretudo são de uma maneira geral mais altos e mais robustos que o cidadão comum que vês à volta, e a estatura e a indumentária, e também o porte, como já te disse, vão produzir-te a inevitável impressão que ocorre a quem como nós se ilustrou pela letra e pela imagem dos livros que lemos e dos filmes que vimos: estamos perante gente muito parecida com outros pastores de África, nomeadamente os tão celebrados Maasai da costa oriental.³⁰⁷

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho accentuates that their men are usually taller and stronger than their women or their male counterparts from other ethnic groups. Concomitantly, these physical descriptions are comparable to those of other shepherds found elsewhere in the continent of Africa, namely the Maasai of the Eastern coast of Africa and of the Peul of Sahel who are also shepherds. This raises questions: could these be the same people who, because of past migrations, were forced to live apart and scattered?

In fact, the Kuvale people found in the Namibe are nomadic shepherds constituting a pastoral farming society related to those African pastoralist societies found elsewhere on the continent of Africa. They usually prefer to live as isolated “small islands” and they have assumed this condition of self-insularity.

Regrettably, they bear the stigma of being usually regarded as thieves. It is believed that these people are clever thieves of cows. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho wrote that every Mucubal (another name for the Kuvale people) is believed to be a thief. They would often steal cows, goats and melons. However, they seem to be aware of the consequence of this behaviour. Maybe that is how they want to be regarded. Stealing someone’s cow can prove that one is young, brave and a prestigious warrior. The interest they show in stealing and eating melons is not easily explained as well. But the fear and

³⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 21 – 22.

stigma of being caught stealing either cows or melons can sometimes stop them from attempting to do it.

Apart from this, many of them are chronically addicted to alcohol. Many Mucubals can spend one or two weeks drinking. They exchange drinks with the goats and calves they possess. When necessary, they work for money to buy alcoholic drinks. Once they are paid, they will immediately think about spending the money on spirits. Some would immediately quit their jobs and go back to their *ongandas* to look after their cattle. They show no interest in paid jobs whatsoever, even though money might drive them specially to look for it in order to buy more cows and increase their herds rapidly.³⁰⁸ As Carvalho says

Mucubal é ladrão. Há sobretudo o roubo de gado, e isso é matéria grave... Mas nas entrevistas que fui fazendo, e muitas com quem não tem gado nenhum para ser roubado, os testemunhos incidem também sobre roubos menores associados sempre, é verdade, à denúncia de falta de dispositivos de controlo por parte do Estado e a uma impunidade geral e nacional que dá cobertura a toda a sorte de desmandos... Mucubal só o que lhes pode controlar é o medo, só pensa em roubar e mais nada, juntam-se a beber e depois só pensam em roubar, trabalhar nada. Mas vai aparecer quem diga que também isso do chamado roubo é mais é um exercício da juventude.³⁰⁹

I interpret these thefts as an expression of youth. Probably, in the Mucubal's mind, these thefts are not seen as such, but simply as what Carvalho called "raids."³¹⁰ These raids are usually done to show strength and power in relation to their enemies. An interesting fact to notice is that these raids are never directed to their clans. A Mucubal would hardly ever go that way, because these acts are seen as attempting against the integrity and balance of the group.

The other interesting fact is also that the old people are hardly ever caught stealing. This is reason to assume that these thefts are the youth's behaviour to exercise power and bravery. Participant observations have shown that it is only the young men who are often seen stealing.³¹¹

³⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 24.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 24.

³¹⁰ A classic example of this study is James Patrick's *Glasgow Gang Observed*, in which he investigates the street boys behaviour, under the cover of a gangster himself. His findings are surprising. Usually, these boys used violence against each other to prove bravery, strength and power. See James Patrick, *Glasgow Gang Observed*, London: Neil Wilson Publishing, 3rd Revised edition, 2013.

³¹¹ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *opus cit.*, p. 24.

The stolen cows are equally intended to increase their wealth rapidly. Increasing the size of the cattle, legally inherited, from close relatives is an imperative for a young Mucubal. And sometimes those stolen cows are intended to add to the dowries paid to marry a girl.

It is worrying to notice that other neighbouring people do take advantage of the fact that the Mucubals are known as thieves. These people steal also cows and blame the Mucubals. Curiously, these people usually dress like the Mucubals to steal and, sometimes, they even speak the language of the Mucubals to disguise themselves. It is only when they are caught stealing that the truth is then revealed.³¹²

Imputations like these ones are not historically new. Even the Bible, especially the Old Testament, also contains discriminatory imputations, especially onto the shepherds.³¹³ Critics believe that pastoralist societies are discriminated because of their type of life. Shepherds are usually nomadic and most of nomadic shepherds are often accused of being independent, uncontrollable, less mild and disobedient to the local authorities, stubborn, bandits and idle. Since they do not appreciate paid and public jobs they cannot be taxed. They are not receptive to the idea of being formally educated. They give more metaphysical value to their empirical knowledge.

Unquestionably, most shepherds of large animals are usually excellent warriors too. Traces, manners and attitudes similar to those other shepherds seem to have been genetically and culturally preserved. This seems to show why they can always adapt easily to any environment which presents itself as hostile. Fighting for their own survival has been done for centuries. One of these traces is definitely that ability to adapt to hostile environments and also to defend themselves and their cattle against attacks or robbery from neighbouring countries.

Guiding enormous quantities of cattle to the grasslands and to the water fountains requires refined military strategies which most shepherds of Africa seem to possess in abundance. Cows are easily stolen because cows can walk, says Ruy Duarte de Carvalho. For someone who needs to cross vast territories with his guided cattle to look after or for water fountains and grassland, learning how to defend oneself and one's cattle against potential attacks is, unquestionably, a required skill.³¹⁴

³¹² Ibid, p. 25.

³¹³ Ibid, p. 25.

³¹⁴ Ibid, p. 26 – 28.

For Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, in the shepherds' mind, culturally framed in this way (theft, defence and survival), the circulation of animals has always some reason, rationality and logic. It is not a mere circulation, but mainly a dynamic process to struggle for survival, to protect the cattle and ultimately to find economic balance or to guarantee reciprocity in the community. As he says,

Na cabeça de um pastor, assim culturalmente modelado, esta circulação de animais corresponde a uma razão, a uma racionalidade, a uma lógica que não a situa tanto como uma articulação de roubos quanto como uma dinâmica de equilíbrio, ou até de reciprocidade.³¹⁵

The same logic explains the thefts they carry out. This logic is probably not understood by sedentary societies and, it is therefore, feared. Someone brought up in the shepherds' way of seeing things does not respect the institutional laws and social norms created by the local authorities. Most shepherds find it difficult to conform to local rules. This brings enormous concerns about insecurity for fixed or non-nomadic societies in comparison to their mobile neighbours, who today are here and tomorrow might be elsewhere, guiding always their huge herds of cattle on foot. That also explains why security services and the local administrations are often worried about controlling them.

Worth mentioning is the fact that for the case of the Mucubals, probably the fear of their neighbouring countries has come from the fact of having been almost extinct owing to the massive deportation they underwent. The so-called war of 1940-41 killed many Kuvale people, swept away most of their territories and cattle, and the remaining population was deported. This is referred to in their language as *kakomba*, which means to uproot everything and leave nothing. Nearly 5000 people were deported to Luanda, Lunda, S. Tomé and Damba and many more were killed.³¹⁶

This war is believed to have been carried out mainly by the *munano* (the *Ovimbundo*) under the leadership of the Portuguese colonialists aimed at imposing taxes on them and in retaliation for the deaths of certain white people killed by Mucubals. For many Portuguese, the war against the Mucubals was a final blow against their military resistance and for the Mucubals it was a moment of self-awareness as a people, a nation and an opportunity to reinforce social boundaries or ethos. Unfortunately, this war is believed to have marked the triumph of the Portuguese colonial power and

³¹⁵ Ibid, p. 27.

³¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 52 – 53. See also his book, *Os Kuvale na História, nas Guerras e nas Crises*, Luanda: Nzila, 2002.

hegemony over these territories. These people, who had showed great resistance towards the Portuguese explorers in the middle of the nineteenth century, were finally defeated and deported to distant lands. The Kuvale people keep sad memories of this defeat and have always blamed the Ovimbundo for what happened. Probably, this is the reason why they look at them with some disdain.

Anthropologically speaking, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho remarks that the Kuvale people are divided into various clanic groups. We find people who are socially banned from their original groups or stigmatized within them due to various reasons: unacceptable behaviour, marriage with people from different ethnic groups rather than theirs. These people are regarded as *Kwesi*, meaning someone who is of lower caste. Most *Kwesi* have managed to integrate themselves whether genetically or culturally in the neighbouring populations. Some went to live in the coastal areas or in the hinterlands as a result of this rejection and were completely influenced by the western style. Many *Kwesi* live in the city of Namibe, some working as soldiers and others as teachers. Since they all look like, one can take them for original Kuvale people. As a matter of fact, their ancestors were Kuvale people as well.³¹⁷ There are also the *Kimbares*, or simply rhino or elephant hunters, another social category.

In the Kuvaleland, great respect is given to the ancestors and to the cult of fire. Everyone fears and cares about the ancestors and the cult of fire. These two symbols are commonly held as sources of social and moral behaviour. Violating them could endanger the whole Kuvale society and organization. All other models of social and economic articulations depend greatly on the obedience to the ancestors and the cult of fire. These are considered to be symbols of social integration and stability within the Kuvale social ethos. They define their cultural identity and are sources of all Kuvale mythologies. As Ruy Duarte de Carvalho puts it,

O culto dos antepassados é nestas comunidades o texto de um código de comportamentos, incluindo os da produção, da distribuição e do consumo. A sua colocação em causa pode abalar todo o sistema comportamental e logo assim as articulações que lhe garantem a viabilidade. Um dos factores integrativos que em meu entender garantem à sociedade dos Kuvale, para o caso, a sua sobejamente demonstrada capacidade para preservar-se, adaptar-se, reproduzir-se e produzir riqueza num meio hostil e frágil, preservando-o embora, é a observância de um

³¹⁷ Ibid, 76 – 89.

modelo de articulações sociais e económicas de que a expressão simbolizada, representada, ritualizada e actualizada mais imediatamente apreensível na sua condensação é o culto do fogo, associado aos antepassados próximos. A ameaça da banição pesa sobre qualquer indivíduo que ofenda tabus ligados ao fogo e ele não pode furtar-se a esse modelo se quer preservar o seu lugar social e, logo assim, o acesso à plena qualidade de pessoa (a palavra *elao* designa o altar ligado ao culto do fogo e significa ao mesmo tempo *sorte*) e à riqueza (o banido é colocado fora dos dispositivos de circulação e reprodução social dos bois), ao pleno exercício da prosperidade pessoal conjecturável, ao prestígio, ao poder efectivo, em suma, que a posse de gado representa. Não falo do modelo que o antropólogo constrói para projectar uma situação ideal que o presente poderia ter desmentido já. Falo do que se passa hoje e é ilustrado pelos ex-militares que aqui regressam e não distingo de quaisquer outros pastores mesmo depois de alfabetizados no exército e ocidentalizados a todos os níveis pelos contextos urbanos que frequentaram. É em referência a esse texto que os ex-militares se reintegram, neutralizando assim o efeito desestruturante sobre o próprio sistema produtivo que poderia ter constituído a sua iniciação junto de um sistema outro, pela via da sua incorporação no exército.³¹⁸

What Ruy Duarte de Carvalho refers to in the quotation above is the core of Kuvale mythology. I will return to this cult or myth of fire and ancestors (*elao*) in the next pages, since together with cows are, as far as I am concerned, the pillars of Kuvale's ethos that define their identity.

Sociologically speaking, it is also interesting to notice the coexistence of two other cultural categories: one mercantile-westernized and the other originally Kuvale, but also marginalized. We can distinguish them by the way they dress. But the dressing style, with the exception of some bracelets used, cannot be the exclusive way to distinguish the Kuvale subgroups from one another. Also, some linguistic aphorisms can reveal more precise differences among them. For example, the statement, 'I spoke', told by a *Mytyiheia* will be *itiha*, while a Kuvale person of *Kavelokamo* or of *Dyombe* will be *Batiha*. The interjection 'Me?' in the mouth of a *Mundyombe* will be *nhô*? And the others will say '*nhu*?'³¹⁹

³¹⁸ <http://www.buala.org/pt/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/o-futuro-ja-comecou> last accessed in 2016.

³¹⁹ These groupings are explained in the next paragraph.

Today, we can probably say that the Kuvale are composed of three subgroups: the *Cobaes*, *Tyiheia* and *Dyombe*. None of the *Tyiheia* or the *Dyombe* marries the *Cobaes*.

The *Tyiheia* have fish as an eating custom. In the past, they used to work for white communities. Today, many of them are involved in public services, which shows that this subgroup seems to be more prepared to be integrated in urban life rather than the other two.

The *Dyombe* are equally different. They are stronger and very skilled people. They speak faster in the conversations. When faced with challenge in combat, they are likely to be tougher, stricter and more courageous than the other two. They can go as far as giving up their own lives for noble causes.

Of course, there is no possibility to confuse a Kuvale and a *Tyilengue* or a Kuvale and a *Mwila* or *Mungambwe*, who are not *Herero*, and not even between a Kuvale and any other *Herero* group like the *Mundimba* or the *Himba*.

Despite this characterization, it is possible to find subgroups among the Kuvale who regard themselves as “more Kuvale” than the others. The *Kavelokamo*, for example, are more likely to consider themselves evolved than the *Tyiheia* and the *Dyombe*. But these interpretations do not make them special and different within the group. These are only subjective ways of positioning oneself within the group with no harm whatsoever.

In addition to what I have said about the fire, other natural elements such as land, water, air and environment are also seen as parts of the Kuvale cosmic understanding. These natural elements form part of the economic and cultural foundations of their life as a group. This reminds me of what the pre-Socratic philosophers said about the existing interconnection of all physical elements and these with moral ones. There is a physical order in the cosmos. Once broken, chaos will immediately follow. The physical order is linked to the cosmic justice. No order, no justice; and no justice no order. In fact, this holistic perspective of life is what seems to make the Kuvale existence physically and socially possible.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho sees similarities with Bachelard’s phenomenology of life in which land and water are crucial elements for small agro-pastoralist communities like this one so that their survival is possible.³²⁰ This existential perspective is environmentally friendly since it accommodates all their productive and economic systems. It protects the air, the water and the space in which they

³²⁰ Ruy de Carvalho, *opus cit.*, p. 122.

circulate, by promoting and defending their land, traditions and ecology, in spite of their unstoppable and necessary social mobility.

These shepherds have never heard anything about Bachelard's phenomenology. Yet, they have been accomplishing it,³²¹ as emphasized by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho. They know by experience that land and water are fundamental elements for biological existence. In addition to this, they have learnt all the kinds of grassland they need for their cattle to survive, where and when to find them, and under which circumstances the cattle should eat them or not. This presupposes that they have the ability to examine the kind of water the cattle should drink, what amount of salt should be given to it and what to do with the new rainfalls, to which they call *vilandava* (to avoid problems). Precaution is always taken in relation to individuals who drink the water which results from these rainfalls.

They know how to cope with their environment as a result of being tightly knitted with it. The Aristotelic theory of natural sciences or even other theories of natural scientists to comprehend nature and the physical environment are not needed here. The techniques or technological tools used by these shepherds to explore nature can be considered as environmentally friendly and quite balanced as far as energy production and consumption are concerned. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho writes.

O pastor que está ali, o da minha legítima invenção também não sabe nada de Bachelard nem de fenomenologias, bem entendido. Mas ele sabe com certeza muito melhor que eu que é entre a terra, o espaço (território) e a água que tudo se joga na vida dele, como, quotidiana, verdadeira. Ele fala com grande precisão nos capins e nas ramas que a terra dá, e onde as há e em que tempo, e quando é que convém que o gado as coma, do sal que ocorre aqui e só tem mais e muito para lá, da água que o gado bebe e é preciso tratar quando e a das pedras, porque choveu e é água nova *vilandava*, e exige para não fazer mal nem as pessoas nem aos animais, que uma não de *tyimbanda* a purifique e abra.³²²

Of course, this type of phenomenology is not learnt scientifically but through communal experiences and practices they have accumulated for centuries. As a matter of fact, Kuvale people

³²¹ Ibid, p. 122.

³²² Ibid, p. 122.

are nomadic shepherds, therefore constantly looking for new grasslands for their cattle. As we pointed out, similarities with all other pastoralist societies spread across the globe can also be found. Economic and political systems which have been identified depend hugely on this constant mobility of cattle.

These shepherds recognise their cows by colour, size and name. Each colour, size or name represents something. Within their onomastic tradition, cows can take names of ancestors and gods. Cows can represent these very ancestors in traditional ceremonies. I will deal with this issue later on when the “symbolism” of it is addressed.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho claims that the Kuvale people are kingless societies divided into hegemonic lineages with distinct clans. The Kingdoms as such, one would say, do not exist among the Kuvale people. Great value and importance is attributed to the elders or the ancestors of their clans. Every Kuvale individual belongs to a clan or a lineage. A clan is made up of relatives of the same family tree, believed to have stemmed from one first common ancestor way back in the beginning of the world. Consanguinity is, therefore, fundamental for the unity and the bond with such relatives.³²³

Accordingly, offspring is determined by women. This means that a clan descends from an old woman from whose womb other numerous mothers, *ad infinitum*, are born. A lineage, however, is a segment of a clan, measured backward from present mothers towards other old mothers for as long as they can be tracked and remembered.³²⁴ So, for men or women, the clanic descent is established from his or her mother’s clan, known as matriarchy. It is different in most human societies where the clanic transmission is normally established from men, known as patriarchy.

In the Mucubal language, the words which denote this clanic reality are *eanda* in the singular or *mohanda* in the plural. The words *dyemba-imu* or *vererimu*, meaning something like womb or “single breast,” correspond to the word lineage. The social interaction among these clans and lineages takes place essentially through the involvement of all local members in the cultural issues concerned with the mobility of cattle.

As observed by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, these clanic traces are not unique to the Kuvale society. They can also be widely identified in other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, among nomadic

³²³ Ibid, pp. 142 – 143.

³²⁴ Ibid, p. 143.

shepherds. This means that probably all pastoralist and agro-pastoralist societies of Angola, Namibia and even of Botswana are structured within the same descriptions, what I would call as a regional 'clanic pattern.'³²⁵

Since some Kuvale clans mix with other ethno-linguistic groups of this same region, it is also possible to find similarities with other clans from the *Nyaneka-Nhumbe*, the *Tyilengue*, the *Mwila*, the *Gambwe*, the *Herero*, which can be found across the Cunene and Botswana, and also with the *ovambo* on both sides of the border between Angola and Namibia.³²⁶

In fact, the *Mukwangombe*, the *Mukwatyite* and the *Mukwambwa* are three unique clanic categories formed among the Kuvale people. It certainly does not matter what subgroup they belong to, whether *Tyiheia*, *Kavelokamo* or *Jamba*.³²⁷

To understand the Kuvale people, one will also need to consider the way they live and function as a social group. Basically, I would say that they live in small groups, to which Carvalho called "domestic groups of consumption." These confined spaces receive the name of *ongandas* and *sambos*. An *onganda* is a house and a unit of production. It can also be used as barns (*kinda* or *tyimbundu*) to store locally produced crops like grains. Occasionally, these grains are acquired through the exchange of their animals with neighbouring farmers.³²⁸

An *onganda* is therefore a space found in a particular geographical area and it can be removed when necessary. The removal of an *onganda* is usually associated with two facts: natural, due to concentration of too much manure or due to lack of grassland; and social, the death of one of the elders of the *onganda*, for example. These are some of the key reasons why the *onganda* does not assume permanently and strictly fixed characteristics within a certain area.

Usually, the *onganda* is abandoned or moved elsewhere, either within the same or in a different area. In fact, it is often moved rather than terminated, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho says.

³²⁵ Ibid, p. 144.

³²⁶ Ibid, p. 143.

³²⁷ Ibid, p. 149.

³²⁸ Ibid, p. 161.

Quando necessário, o local de uma *onganda* é abandonado e ela transita para algures dentro da mesma área. Mas é de facto transferida, não se trata de acabar com uma e fundar outra.³²⁹

Nevertheless, there are always shepherds who do not stay longer in these *ongandas* or simply will never stay in these spaces. These people are always moving from one *onganda* to the other. These people are called the *buluvulus* or simply the real shepherds. I will come back to them.

The concept of *onganda* is applied either to the permanently occupied domestic space by one or more Kuvale families or to the social entity which this group of people is constituted of. This includes all its belongings such as furniture, livestock, cultural symbols, children, house workers, cattle and so forth.

Thus, the *onganda* also expresses the universal concept of home in that sense. Physically described, the *ongandas* are round areas made of pines and other shrubs within which one or more families of shepherds or even their cows normally gather. The houses are built with sticks of *mutiati* (a type of tree) which converge from a circular basis of two metres of diameter to a central edge situated within two metres of height, on which a mud based concrete mixed with grass and droppings of the cows is observed.

The houses can be taken for kilns or ovens. The entrances or the doors of these houses (the *dyiuvu*) are short in height. Its inhabitants must be on their knees every time they go in the house. Some houses have got tunnels projected outwards to avoid rain floods. These entries are locked with skins attached to sticks or wood. If one looks inside, one will most likely see more skins of cow stretched on the floor. These skins are used as mats for people to sleep on. If it is a married couple using it, one will observe that the right side of the mat belongs to the husband and the left side to his wife. On each side one finds their personal belongings and in the middle of the hut is the fire (*elao*). Every evening, the fireplace is carried inside to avoid bewitching from the neighbouring people, some of whom are believed to be evildoers, including the instruments used for milking the cows. Nothing is left outside the *onganda* for fear of witchcraft.

Outside and in front of some of these houses, one will identify some stones and dry logs laying down on the floor, piled up in rectangular and in parallel shapes. Right on the top of the house a

³²⁹ Ibid, p. 162.

stockade is built, made usually of parallel sticks, vertically implanted where one will be able to observe huge bones of cows which were slaughtered for ritualistic purposes.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho notes that each one of those stones and some of these logs were given a name. Probably, these come from their ancestors or gods. The whole pile constitutes a sacred altar, a place of worship called *elao*. Actually, I introduced this topic earlier. So what is an *elao* exactly? The *elao* is the name of that stone where the “fire” of a man and his family must remain lit. Fire here is used both in the natural and in the metaphoric sense. Besides, products, powders, relics, nails of animals killed and scales are usually all buried below it. This place must be an inheritance from the father and will have to be protected if one wants to keep one’s luck throughout life.

Basically, that fire is the foundation of social projection and recognition within the Kuvale society. Even the polygamy, known as *oluvale*, also depends on this *elao*. You cannot have more than one wife if you do not know how to take care of your *elao*, since each male individual is supposed to have his own fire (*elao*). Evidently, as one will imagine, it is a place full of dos and don’t, or simply of prohibitions. It is fundamentally a male dominated place, and the man obviously is the head of the house alone.³³⁰

In that case, the social space for women and invited guests is primarily on the back of the house, separated by a fence of pines called *ketambo*. It is there that women cook, eat and socialize. The access to the *elao* or male space is only given when they are called by their husbands or when they take food to them. On the other hand, the men, once they choose to abide by the rules, follow and protect them.

Eating seated beside their own *elaos*, the food that their wives or daughters take to them after being cooked separately in a different saucepan, is one of the ways of keeping this tradition unbroken. After receiving the food, men pray over it and drop some of it on the altar (*elao*) to please or appease their ancestors or gods and ask for their protection or for more cows. They may call their other male counterparts, usually their authorised guests or male children they wish to have close, and eat with them before such *elaos*. Those invited before the *elaos* must undergo certain ritualistic

³³⁰ Ibid, pp. 165 – 166.

preparations in order to be cleansed of any impurity, which might offend or upset the gods and the ancestors.³³¹

Besides this, there is a social division of labour within the *onganda*. Men are expected to look after the cattle and they are in charge of the security of the *ongandas*. Women, however, take care of the house and of the children, and some of them practice agriculture in the *hepia* (small pieces of land surrounding the houses) used for domestic gardening. Clearly, there are different areas for working and producing, for socializing and celebrating, as well as for cultural exchanges and political activity within the *ongandas*.

The *sambo* is also another concept found among the Kuvale shepherds. They can be described as circular areas surrounded by branches of pines spread across the Kuvale territories. They can be compared to the architecture used by most African shepherds. In general, they are spaces set up to receive cattle and people within them for a short period of time, because of the complexity involved in the practice of *transumância* (mobility). The material used for constructing varies according to specific zones. In some zones, people use shrubs, and in other they use the branches of pines. These places also serve to keep the newly born calves. That explains why many round areas, protected by a thick fence of pine trees, can be found within the *sambos*. Occasionally, the calves are put and removed from there to be fed or cleaned.³³²

The *sambos* are, in fact, a place for feeding the calves, for milking the cows and for building temporary houses for people on the move. The *sambo* is only occupied as long as the grassland is still available or when there is water nearby. It is immediately abandoned as soon as these elements become scarce. This is usually dependent on the seasonal cycles of the year.

At this point I would like to go back to the issues of lineage and clanic families. Power and influence are both exercised by the most acknowledged members of certain lineages and clans. Thus, the political system of a Kuvale society would be described as clanic, there seem to be the emergence and the reproduction of central forms of modern governance. As already mentioned, each Kuvale person belongs to one clan or lineage. All social mobility depends on this clanic concept. From childhood to adulthood, and eventually to death, all social relations are established in accordance

³³¹ Ibid, p. 166.

³³² Ibid, p. 161.

with the social rules pre-established by their ancestors, recreated and accumulated over the times by these lineages and clans.³³³

Hence, power circulates almost invisibly within those *ongandas* and *sambos*, whether when the shepherds fix themselves in a new area for a short or relatively long period of time or when they move to more distant areas. The Kuvale people hardly ever change their cultural practices due to the influence received of their neighbours. Even with great pressure exerted on them by the neighbouring people such as the *mumwilas*, *bundos* or *munanos* (most of them sedentary because of their productive agro pastoralist practices and deeply influenced by the West), the Kuvale continue to resist strongly to all kinds of cultural influences coming from them.

Notwithstanding that, some members do leave their communities now and then for compulsory military service in the State. In the past, this was much more noticeable, because of the long war experienced in Angola. The Mucabals are fierce fighters and the army took advantage of that fierceness, and enlisted and sent many of them to the hottest battle-fields. Many generals attest to their achievements in combats. Other Mucubals leave on business elsewhere in the country for a short or long period. But most of them return home and reintegrate once again in their previous communities after going through the cleansing process before their *elaos* and before the whole community. And if they managed to make some money while working in foreign lands, this money would usually be allocated to buy more cows, which is part of their economic circuit.

All in all, the Kuvale people are deeply attached to their cows, probably more than to their children, without exaggeration. The cows are the centre of life and are the main reason for their physical and social mobility. I will discuss it further in the section dedicated to the symbolism of cows. For now, let me turn to the Igbos, who are also another fascinating African ethnic group and the subject of this research as well.

5. 2. 2. The Igbo World: land, language, culture and social practices

The Igbo people lived mainly in the southeast region of the present-day Nigeria. They speak the Igbo language. The use of proverbs is highly valued. Speaking of Igbo masquerade culture and the language of African poetry, Osita Ezeliara writes that

³³³ Ibid, p. 142.

Beyond the thematic vision, then, one very important element associated with the night masquerade is the language it uses in the course of its marching through the communities. As Ezenwa-Ohaeto rightly points out, proverbs, aphorisms, anecdotes of all forms, are brought into play so that 'metaphors battle imagery', just as 'parables stumble against proverbs' (1996, 8). For the Igbo, proverb is so relevant that it is taken for granted that every well brought-up child should be knowledgeable in its applications in conversational situations. Chinua Achebe (1958, 5) observed in his fiction that 'proverb is the palm-oil with which words are eaten' amongst the Igbo. Thus, as the Igbo would always say, when a child listens to a proverb and waits for further clarifications from his or her interlocutor, it means that the bride price paid on the mother was a waste. Yet, this does not rule out the obvious contradictions and crass opportunism that come with some of the proverbs in certain situations. It is not strange therefore, that a people that would readily admit that *E too dike na nke omere eme, omekwa ozo* ('Praise a warrior on his/her rare achievements, and he/she would try to achieve something greater') would also name their children *Ibeto* ('Praises hardly ever come from neighbours and relatives'), or *Ohaeto* ('Praises never come from the masses/people'), as if neighbours and relatives are allergic to heroic accomplishments.³³⁴

Some archaeological studies have indicated that their traditional customs are more than 1000 years old. It is one of the largest stateless societies in Africa, yet well organized. They were not able to unite into a single kingdom as the Ashanti in Ghana did, for example, despite plenty of food, a dense population, and substantial trade. Instead, they lived in small autonomous communities scattered over a wide geographical area.³³⁵

The Igbo were divided into three main groups: the *Onitsha* (northern), the *Abakaliki* (north-eastern), and the *Ika* (western). According to my findings, the Igbo language evolved into many dialects.

Politically speaking, I would say that the Igbo were independent and democratic, with a type of no centralized government and no dynasties of hereditary lineages. But some exception can be remarked, especially with the eastern Igbo, who tended to form large units, usually referred to as clans. These units had in average about 5000 people, and were some kind of federation of several

³³⁴ Osita Azeliora, "Colonial Discourse, Poetic Language and the Igbo masquerading Culture in Ezenwa-Ohaeto's the Voice of the Night Masquerade," in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, June 2009, pp. 47 – 48.

³³⁵ See Willie F. Page (ed.), "Igbo" in *The Encyclopaedia of African History and Culture*, Vol. 5 (2005). See also, Chinua Achebe. "The Igbo World and Its Art" in *Hopes and Impediments*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1988. 42–5. Print.

villages. For each village there was a common market and a meeting place where people exercised democracy and power. The leadership of each village group was entrusted to a village council, a kind of parliamentary system, made up of lineage heads, elders, and other influential and wealthy men.³³⁶

There were no hereditary aristocracy requirements to become a council leader. The exercise of leadership in the council depended on personal success. The system of governance was participatory. Decisions had to be unanimous, so even the young men in the village group were empowered politically. Unfortunately, women were not included in this political role, although they played an essential part in the Igbo economy, growing much of the food and participating in the commercial and religious life of the village.

Most Igbo groups lived in rain forest areas, except for the north-eastern groups. Naturally, they were subsistence farmers, and there was a distinct gender-based division of labour in the fields, with the men in charge of yam cultivation, which was the Igbo's staple crop.³³⁷ I will address this issue with more detail in the next point.

Women grew all the other crops, including cassava, taro, melon, okra, pumpkin, beans, and after the Portuguese introduced it from the Americas, corn (maize). Like the Kuvale people, the Igbo also kept some livestock, which was a valued commodity that added to the owners' prestige in the community and was mostly for ritual use in sacrifices.

Elechi Amadi says that

Igbo society was both male-dominated and patriarchal. Therefore, gender roles tended to be very traditional. Men supported their families by farming and hunting; they were also expected to contribute to public festivals, honour sacrificial obligations, and defend their communities in times of war. Women led largely but not solely domestic lives, learning to carry out household chores from early childhood. Once women were married, their primary duties include cooking, raising children, and otherwise maintaining an orderly household.³³⁸

³³⁶ See Osita Azeliora, "Colonial Discourse, Poetic Language and the Igbo masquerading Culture in Ezenwa-Ohaeto's the Voice of the Night Masquerade," in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, June 2009, p. 45.

³³⁷ See Chima J. Korie, "Yam is King! But Cassava is the Mother of all Crops: Farming, Culture and Identity in Igbo Agrarian Economy," in *Dialectical Economy*, Springer, 2007, pp. 221 – 232.

³³⁸ Elechi Amadi, "The Concubine" in *World Literature and Its Time*, edited by Joyce Moss and Lorraine Valestuk, Volume 2, San Francisco: Published by Gale Group, 2000, p. 49.

Women did business at the marketplace, with men sponsoring wives and daughters who conduct trade. Amadi highlights that “love was not necessarily the sole reason for marital union.” Women were seen as properties of their husbands. Amadi underlines that “in the husband’s eyes, the best possible wife was one who could bring him material wealth and bear him strong and healthy children.” A new wife was expected to adjust and live in a “compound of closely grouped houses,” usually besides her husband’s family. She was, therefore, a member of the husband’s clan. Most of the time there was no free will in choosing a wife. A wife was chosen from a particular family and imposed on the male candidate. They could marry at as early as sixteen years old. Sometimes, marriage was even agreed on when the boy and the girl were still children. Constant and intentional visits were expected to take place during those years before the age of sixteen. Gifts and dowries or pride price were brought in to compromise the parts involved in the marriage process.³³⁹

Amadi adds that “there was no fixed interval between the time of engagement and the actual marriage, which was left to the decision of the families. The final wedding festivities – which included a marriage feast – lasted seven days, at the end of which the bride would be escorted to their new home, at night, by her female companions.”³⁴⁰ In the novel of Achebe, marriage preparations between Obierika’s daughter, Akueke, and her suitor, Ibe, followed just this very pattern.

Divorce was also a fact in Igbo society, probably not as frequent as in the West. Amadi says that in Igbo society “dissolving a marriage tended to be less complicated than formulating one. A man could divorce his wife simply by ordering her to leave his compound. If she resisted, he could drive her out.” After the marriage is dissolved, “their children remained with her husband. Since the man had paid a bride price, he treated his wife as his possession.”³⁴¹

But women could also start “divorce proceedings in an unsatisfactory or abusive marriage by running away from their husbands. A man who was so abandoned might demand his wife’s return or, if he agreed to the divorce, a reimbursement of what he had paid for.”³⁴² The refund of the bride price was only done if the woman in case married another man.

Poligamy was normally accepted in the Igboland. Actually, certain women endorsed the practice. It was seen as a sign of “prestige and prosperity” both for men and women. Therefore, “the

³³⁹ Ibid, p. 50

³⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 50

³⁴¹ Ibid, p. 51

³⁴² Ibid, p. 51

more wives they had, the higher their social status was in Igbo society. Under native law and custom, however, a man's first wife enjoyed certain privileges; she was head of the women in the family compound. Subsequent wives were considered secondary to the first wife or head wife in all respects. Igbo women themselves were often proponents of polygyny, because of the added social status their husbands acquired after marrying again."³⁴³

Amadi says that "it was humiliating to be a man's only wife, for such a status intimated that the husband was a poor man. If, on the other hand, one was a first wife in charge of several other women, one gained status with the position. A head wife frequently found the women who later joined her husband's household to be a source of companionship and domestic assistance."³⁴⁴ But unnoticeable affairs or concubine outside marriage were also common.

Amadi observes that "not all Igbo marriages were polygynous." It means that when men died their families continued to look after their widows as part of their unit and these women usually took care of the husbands' properties, although sometimes their brothers became heads of their families.³⁴⁵

As for mourning rituals, Amadi says that the Igbo,

Especially women, responded to the death of a loved one with loud weeping and lamentations. The widow or mother of the newly deceased would often be surrounded by friends and family in case she do herself an injury while disturbed with grief. The speedy burial of the deceased – along with some emblems of his life and work, like his favourite tools and weapons – was accompanied by sacrifices and purification rites. A new widow was expected to weep copiously for her dead husband during the four or five days immediately following her loss. She would then move to a secluded house in the family compound, where no man could see or speak to her for three Igbo weeks (12 days).³⁴⁶

Furthermore, according to Amadi

For seven Igbo weeks (28 days), a widow was prohibited from bathing or combing her head. Her sole occupation during that time was to mourn for her dead. After an

³⁴³ Ibid, p. 51

³⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 52

³⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 51

³⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 51

unspecified length of time, however, a second burial ceremony was held for the deceased. Unlike the original burial, these rituals was far more festive, a feasting rather than a grieving time, the occasion in which the deceased received a special goodbye before leaving for the spirit world. The deceased's family spared no expense in honouring the memory of the departed – besides feasting, the second burial often featured singing and dancing.³⁴⁷

As far as suicide is concerned, it was seen as a taboo across the Igboland. Amid says that

In the past, certain acts were considered abominations, which called for elaborate sacrifices and purification rituals. The belief was that no one had the right to reject the gift of life, which came from Chukwu, so people who committed suicide were considered as spiritual outcasts. The Igbo subscribed to the existence of two worlds – the human world in which they lived and the spiritual one in which the ancestors dwelled. Those who died by suicide were not given decent burials because they were not allowed to return to the world of the ancestors. Neither did they belong in the human world, according to Igbo thought. Instead they were carried into a part of the forest to prevent pollution of the earth and ward off evil spirits.³⁴⁸

So, when Okonkwo took his own life in the drama told by Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* it made no sense and the community knew what to do in this particular case.

As far as land is concerned, "it was owned communally by groups of kinsmen and was made available to individuals for farming and building. Yet, an Igbo village consisted of a cluster of huts belonging to individual household units, usually of the same patri-lineage. Women and men took part in fieldwork, planting and harvesting crops of their own."³⁴⁹

Religion was fundamental for holding the communities together. Polytheism was the characteristic of pre-colonial society. But there was a belief in one God, whom they called Chwuchwu, who was believed to be closer to the community. Opata describes Igbo mythology in the following terms:

Igbo mythology is replete with examples illustrating the fact that this supreme being used to be close to individuals, and in fact used to intervene in the affairs of individuals

³⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 52.

³⁴⁹ See Willie F. Page, "Igbo" in *Encyclopedia of African History and Culture*, New York: The Learning Source, Ltd, 5 vol. 2005, p. 105.

and communities, until it was annoyed by the aberrant behaviour of some individuals, women especially, who transgressed one overriding code or the other. . . . From all accounts, it appears that the supreme being having decided to abscond from intervention in the day to day activities of human beings decided to vest some of His powers on beings with lesser and localized powers.³⁵⁰

All scholars of Igbo studies would probably agree that Igbo traditional religion was a way of life which involved reciprocal rights and obligations between the material world of the Igbo and the immaterial world of the spirits.³⁵¹ The objective was to maintain harmony between both worlds, ensure peace and prosperity for the people and the survival of their lineages through time. This means that traditional Igbo religion included belief in a creator god, an earth goddess, and many other deities and spiritual entities. That is why most of their religious practices revolved around ancestor worship. They believed that their ancestors could protect and help them with daily problems.

Also, they relied on oracles and divination to receive messages from the spirit realm. In contrast, if their 'dead' ancestors were angry, the Igbo believed that these restless spirits could cause tremendous trouble in the village.

Secret societies were also a reality among the Igbo. There were secret male societies, which were called *mmo* among the northern Igbo. The name of these secret societies varied from groups to groups. For example, the *mmo* conducted many rituals to appease these spirits and held elaborate funerary ceremonies to show their respect for their more recently departed kinsmen. Chinua Achebe talks about these secret societies as well: the *egwugwu* society, for example. The nine *egwugwu* represented a village of the clan. Their leader was called 'Evil Forest'. Smoke poured out of his head. This secret society was profoundly feared in all nine villages.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ Damian U. Opat, *Essays on Igbo World View*. Nsukka, Nigeria: AP Express, 1998, p. 150.

³⁵¹ See, Gloria Chuku, *Igbo women and economic transformation in southeastern Nigeria, 1900–1960*. Routledge, 2005, pp. 43–44; Cyril Daryl Forde; G. I. Jones,) *The Ibo and Ibilio-Speaking Peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria*. International African Institute by Oxford University, 1950; John Eberregbulam Njoku *The Igbos of Nigeria: Ancient Rites, Changes, and Survival*. Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1990; Willie F. Page, "Igbo" in *Encyclopedia of African History and Culture*, New York: The Learning Source, Ltd, 5 vol. 2005; Katharine Slattery, "The Igbo People - Origins & History". www.faculty.ucr.edu. School of English, Queen's University of Belfast. Retrieved April 20, 2016.

³⁵² Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 65.

In general, African secret societies have had magic and religious purposes. In some cases, they are efficacious means of social control and therapy. They are protectors of several cultural traditions like the secrets of witchcraft and sorcery from the unknown intruders. Most of these secret societies were completely disintegrated because of the presence of colonial powers. Probably, this disintegration has also become one source of ethnic conflicts in many African ethnic groups. The European presence has desacralized many of these societies. Let us not forget that African secret societies also played judiciary and political roles among many ethnic groups.

In these societies, a warning coming from an ancestor would be enough to appease some of the communal conflicts. Witches and sorcerers were used as social controllers of entire villages. They could either cause evil or punish evildoers. The swearing in power of new leaders, for example, was usually followed by a blessing or approval of chiefs from secret societies. They involved strange ceremonies, animal sacrifices and religious rituals.

Nwoga firmly argued that the concept of the Supreme Being as understood in the western religious tradition was not originally present in Igbo religious culture.³⁵³ Although this concept was absent from the religious world of the Igbo, one thing is for sure they believed in a creator not directly involved in the human affairs. As C. N. Ubah put it,

A pervasive feature of the religious scene was the peaceful coexistence of Supreme Being, divinities, and ancestors. None of these claimed that they alone were the only proper or legitimate objects of worship. This degree of mutual tolerance was reflected in the Igbo belief that once a person had given any subject of religious attention his due the latter should not, and for all practical purposes did not, bother about what else he did with his time and resources.³⁵⁴

Ubah pointed out to the important position the divinities and the ancestors occupied in the life of the Igbo. This means that every Igbo village possessed a communal deity “which was believed to hold the key to its future and which was responsible for public welfare and the security of the community in general.”³⁵⁵ Deities such as *Ala* (or *Ajala*), the earth deity, which was the custodian of the moral code and *Uhejiaku*, and the yam deity, which was responsible for agricultural production, were particularly important. “*Ala* punished breaches of the moral code, and *Uhejioku* meted out

³⁵³ See D. I. Nwoga, *The Supreme God as Stranger in Igbo Religious Thought*, Nigeria: Ekwereazu, 1984.

³⁵⁴ C. N. Ubah, ‘Religious Change among the Igbo during the Colonial Period’, in *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Vol. 18, Fasc. 1 (Feb., 1988), p. 72.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 72.

punishment to those who stole the products of the farm, particularly yams.” Ubah observes that “these deities also received sacrifices in particular seasons of the year to thank them for all they did the previous seasons and ask for their continued favour in the season ahead. Sacrifices had to be made to *Ala* if the land was polluted, through incest, for instance, or some other kind of abomination. If *Uhejioku*, for example, lost its temper, the fields would lose their fertility, and the result would be famine.”³⁵⁶

Of course, this religious mind-set was changed with the presence of western missionaries as we will see ahead. But I would argue that the change was never deep and complete since most Igboland continued to follow beliefs from both Christian and traditional religions.

All things considered, I can conclude that both Igbo and Kuvale people represent themselves as special and self-sufficient nations yet they acknowledge and respect exogenous and cultural differences and constructions. Therefore, they can also be epistemologically compared and subject to universal reading.

5. 3. Unveiling cultural encodings: *Yam* and *Cow*

Why is Yam³⁵⁷ central to the Igbo self and world-representations and Cows to the Kuvale’s? Yam and Cows are at the centre of Igbo’s and Kuvale’s existence respectively. They were often associated with great cultural festivals, rituals, symbolic representations and mythological readings in these two societies.

According to visited sources, cultural festivals have always been a long-standing tradition in Africa.³⁵⁸ The main purpose of the celebration of festivals was to reinforce cultural values and to unify a community around common goals. This means that festivals have been considered as traditional markers of significant rites of passage. So, there were festivals to mark the advent of agricultural seasons, the success of harvest, the marriage of someone, the healing of a sick person, the death of an elder, the thanks-giving parties, the victory in a battle, the birth of certain children, the anniversary of the foundation of a village and so forth.

³⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 73.

³⁵⁷ According to the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 3rd Edition 2008, *Yam* is ‘a potato-like root from a tropical climbing plant that can be eaten, or the plant it grows from.’ It is mostly grown in the West and North of Africa. It is the main food for most of these people.

³⁵⁸ See Willie F. Page, ‘Festivals’, *opus cit.* pp. 75 – 76.

These festivals were usually characterized by wearing dresses of specific colours, masks, esoteric dances and ceremonies, very rhythmic drumming styles, melodic songs, chanted poems of praise, epic poems exalting particular heroes, celebration of very uncanny cults to specific deities, enchanting hymns to the ancestors, exotic rituals performed by witches and traditional healers involving fire and animal sacrifices.

5. 3. 1. The Symbolism of Yam for Igbo People

In this context, the Yam harvest was a time for great celebration and incorporated many symbolic rituals. It was one of the most important festivals of the Igbo of Nigeria. This festival marked the beginning of a new year. It dates back to antiquity and it was an occasion for reinforcing cultural values and unifying a community around common goals.

In the preparation of the Yam festival, the Igbo cleaned and painted their houses in the traditional colours of white, yellow, and green. Their clothes were also adjusted to colours of the festival. Drums and trumpets were brought in as well as songs and dances to allure the atmosphere of festivity. Without any doubt, one of the primary objectives of the festival was to honour the earth lineages.

Ritualistically speaking, the event began with the sacrifice of the new yams to the regional deities and ancestors. This was followed by a feast that includes palm wine and the popular regional dish known as *yam foo-foo*. This event was also a tremendous opportunity to show solidarity to relatives and friends, since everyone gathered around the most influencing person of the village, whether poor or rich, to celebrate the yam festival.³⁵⁹

As I said earlier, most Igbo lived in rain forest countries. So, subsistence farming was for most of them the only way to survive and build their villages. There was a distinct gender-based division of labour in the fields. According to Achebe, men were in charge of yam cultivation. Yam was the Igbo's principal crop. While the men cultivated yam, the women grew all the other crops, including cassava, taro, melon, okra, pumpkin, beans, and maize, as I mentioned before.

³⁵⁹ Among other societies with a long history of harvest festivals are the Kamba and Kikuyu of Kenya, the Shilluk of present-day Republic of the Sudan, the Shona of Zimbabwe, and the Sonjo of Tanzania and, of course, the Kuvale people, the subject of my research.

Yam was the king of crops, therefore, a man's crop. It was a difficult art to prepare seed-yams. As put by Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*, "yam stood for manliness, and he who could feed his family on yams from one harvest to another was a very great man indeed."³⁶⁰

Achebe describes the right way to plant yam in order to yield good crops of the kind. Yam is a very challenging plant, but not everybody seems to know about it very well except Okonkwo. His father is an example of those ones who ignore how yam must be grown. "For three or four moons it demanded hard work and constant attention from cockcrow till the chickens went back to roost,"³⁶¹ says Achebe. "The young tendrils were protected from earth-heat with rings of sisal leaves. As the rains became heavier the women planted maize, melons and beans between the yam mounds. The yams were then stacked, first with little stick and later with tall and gig tree branches. The women weeded the farm three times at certain periods in the life of the yams neither early nor late,"³⁶² he added. From this, planting yams was not an easy business. It required meticulous work and attention.

The Feast of the New Yam was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. In the Igboland, there were many deities. Each clan or Igbo village had its own deities. And they were usually different from one village to another. For some villagers, for example, the earth goddess was *Ala* (or *Ajala*), which was the custodian of the moral code *Uhejiaku*, and the yam deity, which was responsible for agricultural production, were particularly important. "*Ala* punished breaches of the moral code, and *Uhejioku* meted out punishment to those who stole the products of the farm, particularly yams," says Achebe.

In the case of *Things Fall Apart*, Ani "played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct."³⁶³ Furthermore, "she was in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth."³⁶⁴

As a matter of fact, "the Feast of the New Yam was held every year before the harvest began, to honour the earth goddess and the ancestral spirits of the clan. New yams could not be eaten until

³⁶⁰ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart...*, p. 25

³⁶¹ Ibid, p. 25.

³⁶² Ibid, p. 25.

³⁶³ Ibid, p. 27.

³⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 27.

some had first been offered to these powers.”³⁶⁵ All people cherished this feast since it was a season of plenty.

Still according to Achebe, “on the last night before the festival, yams of the old year were all disposed of by those who still had them. The new year must begin with tasty, fresh yams and not the shrivelled and fibrous crop of the previous year,”³⁶⁶ Achebe says. “All cooking-pots, calabashes and wooden bowls were thoroughly washed, especially the wooden mortar in which yam was pounded. Yam foo-foo and vegetable soup was the chief food in the celebration. So much of it was cooked that, no matter how heavily the family ate or how many friends and relations they invited from neighbouring villages, there was always a huge quantity of food left over at the end of the day,”³⁶⁷ Achebe added.

In the case of Umuofia, the New Yam Festival was thus an occasion for joy, solidarity, sharing and remembering each other after one or more years of missing one another. Sacrifices of new yam and palm-oil were offered to ancestors in order to ask for protection for farms and farmers, children and the clans in the New Year. The New Yam festival was also animated with wrestling matches among all invited villages, but always within the spirit of feasting and fellowship. So any behaviour that disturbed this spirit was severely criticized, as in the case of Okonkwo who nearly shot dead his second wife Ekwefi in the New Yam Festival for killing a banana tree.

5. 3. 2. The Symbolism of Cows for Kuvale People

As for the Kuvale, they seem to know everything about the cows they possess. They seem to have mastered exactly what kind of cows are worth having or not, which to use for farming without ever learning any technology or zoology. They will tell you that the kind of cattle you should possess are the ones which can walk long miles of distance whether for eating hay or drinking water without getting tired. These types of cattle can resist heat and thirst. Although they face heat and thirst, they have meat of great quality. So, one would say that imported cattle are not for these people since imported cows are not prepared for the usual hardships endured by their cows. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho explains this by saying that

³⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 27.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 27.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 27.

E sabe tudo do gado que tem. Que ele é exacto gado que lhe convém ter para actuar sobre o terreno que explora, diverso e extenso, a dar uns pastos aqui, outros lá, uns agora, os outros mais depois, e maximizar-lhe as pontencialidades sem ter tido jamais acesso, todavia, a qualquer tratado de zootecnia. Ele sabe que o gado que tem é que sabe andar, tem pernas, tem cascos grandes e duros, pode resolver-se sem dificuldade grandes deslocações diárias tanto para beber como para comer, e se for preciso bebe só de dois em dois dias, resiste bem ao calor e à sede, moderado de bossa mas generoso de pele, e essa é a sua qualidade primeira... O gado importado está muito bem mas não é para ali, não pode andar o que é preciso, vais ter que lhe encostar a comida e a água, não é Maomé que vai à montanha, tens que a trazer a Maomé, nem vai ao sal, é preciso dar-lho em blocos que importam também.³⁶⁸

The milk which is extracted from these cows is considered as one of the keystones of Kuvale people's economy and diet.³⁶⁹ The consumption of meat is usually complementary to drinking milk. It is socially regulated, inscribed within a policy of the usage of surplus alone. Each family possesses its own cattle. The cattle of each family flocks together. They circulate within individual and common spaces called *sambos* or *ongandas*, two concepts already addressed. But when a member of a family slaughters a cow he is expected to do it within his own compound as tradition requires. The meat of cows is never cooked in the same saucepan where, for example, the goat's meat was. Any slaughter of cows is always attached to profane or ritualistic choices. I will come back to it. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho says that

O leite e essas reservas de cereal, milho principalmente e massango, asseguram o grosso do consume nutritivo dos Kuvale. Junta a isso o consumo circunstancial que advém da morte natural de bois e carneiros velhos, doentes ou acidentados, ou então de animais saudáveis e em bom estado mas abatidos a pretexto de situações socialmente previstas e sancionadas, de cultos diversos, de sacrifícios que asseguram contacto com os antepassados e acções de redistribuição e ostentação justificadas pelas mesmas razões, e terás o quadro quase completo da economia alimentar kuvale.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *opus cit.*, pp. 123 – 124.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 124.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 167.

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho explains that milk and grains (maize corn or millets) are the main consumed nutrients by Kuvale people. Circumstantial consumptions of cows are equally a commonly practiced custom among the Kuvale. Animals such as old lambs, which might have died of disease or accident, or probably killed for ritualistic pretexts (religious cults and sacrifices) can also be included in their complete diet.

As I said, meat is not usually eaten but it is a seasonal practice. There is a time for eating meat. So one might say that the consumption of it is sporadic and circumstantially justified. From time to time, some families are forced to secretly kill goats to satisfy their appetite for meat. But, it is more observed when the Kuvaleland experiences much starvation or to show solidarity to people who are really in need. There are other people who do not ingest goats' meat since it would make them sick. But, they usually shy away from it because of clanic interdictions.

In a place where sharing is encouraged, whatever one achieves must be celebrated with neighbours, including the meat, even when it is a little amount. This is part of the reason why most Kuvale shepherds do not eat chicken because they argue that it is too small to be shared. Usually, they keep chickens and the eggs to exchange them with salt, clothes or other goods or for children.³⁷¹

In some areas, wild fruits are also included in their diet. Most of the collected fruits are used to produce alcohol for local consumption. They would not eat them fresh. Wild leaves called *lombis* and *ombwa* are also collected from the forests to be used as sauce for maize or millet meals.

Unquestionably, the consumption of milk is central for Kuvale people. When milk is insufficient, the calves and the children will have priority over the adults. In case of severe shortage of milk extracted from local cows, the goat's milk can also be consumed, especially by children. Despite that, milk of cows can be abundantly consumed from March through September. Shortage is not expected during this time and it is usually when butter is eventually produced. Enough quantity of butter is produced to be stored for future consumption. As mentioned, there are times in the year when the cows stop producing sufficient milk for the whole community. This usually happens when the animals are in the move far from the *ongandas*, travelling to distant places in order to look for grassland, water and salt. On those circumstances, the supply of milk drops significantly. Moreover, the grease extracted from milk is not only used for nourishing purposes but also cosmetic ones,

³⁷¹ Ibid, p. 168.

especially used as a cream lotion for spreading on the skin during dry seasons. The butter is also used for traditional rituals and medical treatments.

The milk extracted from the cows usually undergoes some 'technological transformation' before being consumed. No one would drink in its natural form. The milk in its natural form is called *mahini* and it is considered harmful to one's health.³⁷² Here are the processing procedures: firstly, the milk is poured into a gourd where it will stay until it reaches the state of fermentation. After the fermentation, it receives the name of *mavele*. In these gourds, there are always some residual bacteria which facilitate this fermentation. The *mavele* milk is slightly sour and thick. People call it yogurt in the West or elsewhere. This final solution called *mavele* is what people will eat. They usually drink it with maize or millet meals. Some prefer to add some water to it, to what they call *ompembe*.

However, the milk destined to produce butter goes into some other gourds, called *ontenda* or *malulu*. *Malulu* is the final cream that emerges after the butter is formed. This is stirred the whole afternoon in a gourd hung on a cross-shaped stick known as *mwakelo*. *Malulu* is usually drunk with water and it is very nutritious.

This processed milk which was produced is distributed in the community. As said earlier, the social distribution is also one of strengths of the Kuvale socioeconomic system. I would say that the cow and the milk are two important symbols of the Kuvale culture. While Yam is an important cultural and economical symbol for the Igbo, for the Kuvale, it is the cow and the milk.

The milking of cows is an activity done primarily by women with the assistance of young children, sometimes under five. These children learn how to let the newly born calves go out of the compounds. And they learn the names given after these calves by heart from an early age. When women drain the cows, milk is collected in wooden plates (*muholo*) and then brought at the entrance doors. It is the oldest wife of a polygamous husband who verifies if the milk is being extracted from the right cows or not. The milking must usually be done from those cows traditionally considered for such an activity. As Ruy Duarte de Carvalho illustrates,

A ordenha é em princípio feita pelas mulheres com a ajuda de crianças Às vezes muito pequenas, já a partir dos 4 anos de idade, que regulam a saída dos vitelos de dentro do *tyinyango* para que venham, um por um e por escasso momentos antes de serem de novo afastados, chupar as tetas das mães para abrir-lhes o leite. Este é recolhido

³⁷² It should be remarked here that *mahini* in Huila is the milk already fermented while there this is called *mavele*.

para recipientes de madeira, *muholo*, ou para kindas pequenas, *tyilandwe*, e depois trazido para as portas das casas, a da mulher mais antiga de um homem se o leite está a sair das vacas delas ou daquelas que o homem lhe atribuiu para seu consumo e dos filhos que tem com ela.³⁷³

Neither the milk nor the tools used to extract should be used randomly. This complexity is determined by the origin of the milk and logically the cows where it came from. It is not the ownership or the quantity or even the quality of production which determines it, but rather, the lineage. In this case, it is the matrilineage which is determinant.

Additionally, the mobility of cows (transumância) begins at the end of the dry season. The cattle go westward and remain in Virei and Tyikweia for some time. Afterwards, the shepherds leave this place and go wait for rainfalls near the mountains of Kangai. These shepherds who guide the cattle are usually young adults. They are assigned to carry and look after huge herds of cows. They can also carry other animals, which were acquired by means of raids or *ovita* among these cows they inherited legally.

Great part of the animals which are carried belong to the elders of the villages, who in spite of their age, still have a close control over the wealth they possess. Their cattle is given to the young adults known as *buluvulus* of the family, who will walk together with the *buluvulus* of other families, forming huge herds of cows, which move to distant grasslands, climb the mountains and descend as far as the rivers.

A cow is, therefore, pivotal in the Kuvale culture. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho speaks of three types of cows: economic cow (*bos economicus*), sociological cow (*bos sociologicus*) and ecological cow (*bos naturalis*). The *bos economicus* is assured through the direct use of the animal production. The *bos sociologicus* is the recognition that cows are a social commodity. Cows have a social significance since they represent the Kuvale community. It is through the cattle that a Mucubal grows, marries, bears children, prospers, eats, drinks, dances, enjoys life, suffers, mourns and gives meaning to his or her life. The cows can unite the community or split it apart. A Kuvale shepherd knows that his cows are not his property alone but also of the whole community.³⁷⁴ He knows that any irresponsible spending will *ipso facto* affect him or his community.

³⁷³ Ibid, pp. 169 – 170.

³⁷⁴ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores...*, p. 179.

This social dimension of the cows is observed also at the mourning events. Even at these times of grief and funerals people talk about cows. Usually, it is a boy or a young man who go around spreading the sad news of someone who passed away. He is sent across the *ongandas* and the *sambos* screaming loudly, a ritual called *muhuri kuhula* to announce the death. Then the body of the deceased is placed on the *elambo*. The *elambo* is the place where the mourning of the dead takes place. In the case of the death of an adult man, his children are expected to cover their heads with blankets, laying on the floor. This fulfils one of the most important phases of the mourning ceremony called *kaluapu* or *kutunuanya*, to greet or mourn over the defunct body.³⁷⁵

The widow, *mwepe*, *muthu mupengue*, hides herself in one of the houses. She cannot communicate with anyone. She is only saluted during a ceremony called *kupindula pithitha* to take place once the mourning period is over.

On the way to the cemetery for the burial, the participants are supposed to jump over beheaded cows, struck dead by machetes because of the dead person. These animals are usually one ox and one cow. The ox would come from the *hupas* group, the ones that were with him and the cow would come from his *ehako*, the ones that were far from him with the *buluvulus*. The horns are buried together with him in the same tomb.

According to Carvalho, all the offspring of the slaughtered cow switched to the category of *Kakethe*, that is, animals which were now subject to strict interdiction. This does not happen to the *hupas*. As already mentioned, these *Kakethe* followed the dead to the cemetery. There, they are spanked with branches taken from a tree called *mukambi*. The ears are cut off and the blood is spilt in the tomb. With this ritual, these cows receive the name of *betatifwa* or equally *thilahombe*, which means forbidden.³⁷⁶

It follows that the *betatifwa* are animals which deviated from the normal circulation and production. Therefore, they are subject to great restrictions, especially when it comes to the production of milk and meat. They can no longer produce milk for consumption. If they are slaughtered, their skins will not be used and the bones burnt. According to this ritual, these cows are believed to be sacred and cannot be seen touched by profane hands, especially of those people who

³⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 200 – 203.

³⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 205.

are regarded as not meaning well. Some have used parts of these cows to bewitch the families in grief. To stop this from happening, the bones must be completely incinerated.

After the period of mourning is over, a ceremony called *the payment of nampingos*³⁷⁷ follows. What is this ceremony about? *Nampingo* means a female animal, and it is usually a cow. This ceremony is conducted by a man called *mwarilume*. This man is a key figure during the interactions or negotiation that take place. He is indicated *ad hoc* to play the priestly roles being some kind of spokesman for the ancestors during situations that involve mourning or the sacrifice of animals. A *mwarilume* is usually an average and aged men, and above all, someone who is highly respected by the community, chosen from the *moname*,³⁷⁸ or distant relatives within a particular *eanda* or clan of the dead father or of the ancestor to whom a sacrifice is dedicated.

It is to him that the corpse is given in order to carry out the burial rituals as well as the *nampingos* ceremony. Two days after the burial of the dead, the community comes together to quantify the debts left by the dead when he was still alive. They also resolve the issues concerning about who and what he inherits. It is usually a nephew of the dead who inherits all the cattle which belonged to his uncle. As one sees, the *rendeiro*, the word Carvalho uses, i.e., the person who inherits, can double or triple his wealth quickly since this inheritance will be added onto his already vast herd of cattle. But the downside of this inheritance is the fact that he also inherits debts of the dead person. Usually these debts are paid with the cattle he is inheriting.³⁷⁹ So, it is not too bad.

He is not allowed to take all these cows that he is inheriting with him. Part of these cows is given to the children of the deceased. This practice is called *tyikume*, which means, the cattle was left in the hands of the children. The inheritor has the right to come and fetch one or more cows whenever it is justifiable. For example, when he is in economic need, he can come and fetch some since these cows are his by birth right. Basically, this is what anthropologists call the classificatory kinship.

It is the category of cows called *hupa* that forces the inheritor to pay the *nampingos*, which come from the parents of the deceased person. These are, if you like, the left-overs those parents will take from this ceremony of *nampingos*. The cattle that were *hupa* for the deceased person will

³⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 207.

³⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 208.

³⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 208 – 209.

remain with his inheritor, receiving the name of *ohandyo* (vomit) now. This cattle still belongs to the *eanda* (clan) of the deceased person's father, but will remain in the hands of his *mwingona* (sons), his inheritors.

If the deceased person had his own *mwingona* (sons) to whom he had given the cows *hupa*, it will be before them that the new inheritor will look for information about these *hupa* which were given to them by their father. Since the sons live with their father, it is only them who will know what their father did do or not. The inheritor will check all this information and then take charge of all the property, in this case the cows, left by the deceased person and the children are left with nothing. The Kuvale call this practice *kuhomununa*.³⁸⁰

In fact, it is difficult to have under one's control all the newly inherited cows at once, since most of them are scattered across distant hayfields for pastoral and security reasons. This is part of the strategy adopted by the Kuvale to escape from various catastrophes. For example, a violent drought, thefts and even a local war could affect the cattle which is at nearby areas and kill them all, and the owner would be left with nothing. But, the cattle, distantly scattered across valleys and fields, in the hands of many people are much safe and multiply themselves more easily rather than when they are closer to people in the *ongandas*. You can still be rich in spite of natural or social catastrophes such as burnings, warfare or robbery if they happen to strike the *ongandas*.

In addition to it, this custom is held because personal properties are socially shared among the Kuvale. Even the cattle which is under the *buluvulus'* direct and individual control are somehow properties of their lineages and clans. Despite the inheritances and direct delivery of cows to individuals, the traditional authorities are always behind them controlling, punishing or rewarding their actions.

In reality, cows and yam are central to describing and understanding the Igbo and the Kuvale peoples. Without yam and cow, no social life is possible. Disrupting these social and economic systems was, anthropologically speaking, harsh. The point that comes next is a review on some colonial and post-colonial discourses which may have helped disrupt the social and economic systems of these peoples.

³⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 211 – 212.

5. 4. Reviewing post-colonial imperialism, discourse and cultural hegemony

My claim here is that post-colonial discourse must always work towards the preservation of ethnic groups such as these two, Kuvale and Igbo. Colonial discourses were harmful and destructive to almost all African cultures. Now that most of these cultures are “free” from colonialism, it is time they should be given the legitimate right to exist as truly free nations, without political and ideological interferences from anywhere. Unfortunately, many post-colonial discourses about Africa have still been disruptive, even as we write.

This subchapter is an illustration of how the presence of imperialist powers in Africa was culturally disruptive. A review on these powers and on their cultural hegemony in Africa is addressed. Achebe’s and Carvalho’s texts make reference to it. The interpretation of what happened in the past is important to understand the present of Africa in all social spheres. Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Carvalho’s *Vou lá visitar Pastores* seem to attempt to interpret it either fictionally or ethnographically. Some of these imperialist discourses about or against the continent, its people and cultures, were notorious in the time they lived, and some are still notorious today albeit in different forms.

As I see it, Achebe’s and Carvalho’s texts are post-colonial in this sense, since they seem to denounce and demystify many of imperialist discourses which depict Africa as a continent without culture, history and future. These texts describe the clash of African cultures with those of the West or with each other and pinpoint the social consequences of this encounter.

For me, these texts can still revive all sorts of discussions about colonial and post-colonial issues that were experienced in the past, but with consequences still being felt today. They can also help us understand the current geopolitics from the East to the West or from the North to the South and vice versa. These discussions range from political issues to cultural, anthropological, historical, religious, sociological, philosophical, legal and literary ones. But then, what were these imperialist powers, what discourses they supported, and what motivations laid behind them?

Edward Said says,

Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps.

This problem animates all sorts of discussions – about influence, about blame and judgement, about present actualities and future priorities.³⁸¹

Edward Said's remarks, I think, pinpoint the importance of positioning oneself correctly in interpreting the past. These ideas are relevant since they invite critics to adopt a more accurate approach when addressing issues concerning the imperialist discourses in the subjected geographies and cultures.

Today, present post-colonial discussions on the problems of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa by African scholars in particular, and Africanists in general are characterized by a discourse emphasizing fundamentally blame and judgement in relation to imperialist powers. They accuse the previous colonial empires of having disrupted the black continent politically, economically and culturally. Unfortunately, the defenders of such a view have often reviled most of the best things these empires created in Africa. Of course, they occupied lands. But they also educated peoples and transformed their cultures into more competitive realities.

It should not be ignored that the presence of these empires in the African continent also had a 'civilizational' role, and that the fruit of this presence is recognizable. Modern cities were built; Christianity was brought to most of these countries and with it formal education; the modern notion of state and its different political forms of governance were introduced in spite of a myriad of struggles that followed.

However, one thing is for certain, most colonized cultures such as the Igbo tapped by the robust presence of these empires for centuries have been deeply changed as a result. Surely, these cultures have never been the same again. Most of them lost linguistic identity completely by adopting new languages. Thus far, for many, this presence has been a permanent burden given that the past has continued to affect the present negatively, albeit in different forms. This means that slavery and other forms of oppression are not completely over.

Western Imperialism has not gone away as wished by the African nationalists. Their cultural hegemony is still being felt, unfortunately. In some cases, it only changed its shape and ways of acting, but with the same misleading political discourses and ambitions. As put by Ndirangu Mwaura,

Europe's former colonies may have formally reclaimed political independence decades ago, but in many ways the colonial system still survives...The former colonial

³⁸¹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage Books, 1994, p.1

powers continued to exploit them at will, politically, culturally and economically... When their former colonies attained independence, the colonial powers set to work to undermine them. They maneuvered to have sympathetic individuals brought into power in the newly independent countries, then provided military support for them and eliminated their political opponents.³⁸²

Thus, claiming that colonization has succeeded in hindering cultural representations of post-colonial African societies like the Igbo and the Kuvale is irrefutable. The colonial impact on these societies was huge: it initiated a radical disorganization of traditional African societies, a denigration of African cultures and institutions, and a displacement of the norms and cosmologies that had shaped African identities up to that point.

As a strategy to discuss the claim stated above, I have chosen to review these imperialist powers and discourses. It is also important to define the extent to which it has been happening.

The leading ways in which colonialism and neo-colonialism have been sustained are religion, education, globalization, military and political dominance and, ultimately, warfare. Colonialism used Christianity to format African minds. In this sense, Christianity was used as a benign tool to implant colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The first Europeans to invade Africa were missionaries. Their work opened the door to their nations to colonize the areas where they were operating. British missionaries, for example, always invited the British government to colonize the area where they were trying to establish themselves, and the French missionaries invited the French government. Once colonialism was established, the mission of 'civilizing the natives' was a massive exercise of power and cultural hegemony.

The missionaries also took over education. Their detrimental education was part of the colonization process, as it created distorted loyalties and aspirations in some cases. Some churches functioned to preserve the social relations of colonialism where colonized people were taught the importance of humility and acceptance of suffering and abuses in this world to gain happiness and freedom in the next: the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

The spreading of the gospel by the missionaries was carried out alongside with the promotion of European cultural practices as 'Christian practices' and most of African practices were condemned

³⁸² Ndirangu Mwauru, *Kenya Today: Breaking the Yoke of Colonialism in Africa*, New York: Algora Publishing, 2005, p. 173.

as 'Pagan.' African music, dance and languages were labelled as 'evil' and banned from being used in Christian worship. Is this over?³⁸³

As far as education is concerned, the imperialist governments decided what Africans were taught by determining the education system, influencing the language used, controlling the education content, providing books used in classrooms and directly educating African students. Is this not happening still?

The education system was organized in such a way that it frustrated students and prevented them from developing talents which had no room in a colonial economy. The doctrine of supremacy of the colonial languages over their African counterparts was emphasized. European languages were associated with epistemological prestige and the African ones with animism. Can we not still experience this today?

"Language is a very efficient vehicle for the most virulent forms of cultural imperialism,"³⁸⁴ says Ndirangu Mwaura. "When all modern spheres of life are monopolized by European languages, modernity becomes confused with the European languages and African tongues become backward. This creates a racial and cultural inferiority complex in Africans,"³⁸⁵ he remarked. This means that linguistic education was and is a powerful tool used by imperialist powers to continue domination in Africa. In most cases, it has alienated ex-colonized people and delayed their reaction and resistance against these new forms of colonization.

The colonial education system gave rise to a type of literature known as colonial, where the poetic and narrative universe was about the European people rather than the African. In the context of colonial literature, black people appeared as an accident, sometimes seen paternalistically, and when this happened it was already some improvement, because the norm was their 'animalization' and 'objectivation'. The white was elevated to the category of a mythical hero, who came to plough the wild lands and who was the owner of a superior culture. For example, Manuel Pinheiro Chagas in *Os Sertões d'Africa*, in 1880 wrote in the preface it by saying that «o único país que pode explorar

³⁸³ This is what, for example, caused the Kikuyu to reject the foreign missionaries and form their own churches and schools. Since these schools were founded in the 1920s on the prevailing anti-European culture and anti-colonialism mood, both the missionaries and the colonial government fought them.

³⁸⁴ Ndirangu Mwaura, *opus cit.*, p. 173.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 173.

seriamente a África, é Portugal»;³⁸⁶ Alfredo de Sarmiento writes about the black as «é um homem na forma, mas os instintos são de fera».³⁸⁷

Paradoxically, the white are seen as the most sacrificed. So they are portrayed as dynamic agents of civilization and not oppressors. Augusto Casimiro in *Nova Largada*, 1920 writes: «fiel aos nossos deveres de dominador, grata ao nosso orgulho, útil às populações»³⁸⁸. Also, João de Lemos in *Almas Negras*, 1937, gives to his speech a very racist tone; Herique Galvão writes: «a sua face negra, de beiçola carnuda, tinha reflexos demoníacos»³⁸⁹ or «era um negro, esguio» [o Mandobel] que «dava a impressão [...] dum excelente animal de corrida».³⁹⁰ It can also be read in Hipólito Raposo's *Ana a Kalunga*, 1926, in glorification of 'the imperial mystique': «queimados no ardor silencioso de Golfo, em todo o peito português vai estremecendo o marulhar heróico dos *Lusíadas*».³⁹¹

Of course, the ideas of inferiority about black people circulated in imperialist European societies as well as in the colonial empire itself. Some of these ideas were leaked by racist theorists such as Gobineau and inspired by philosophers like Lévy-Bruhl with his thesis of pre-logic mentality, although he renounced to it shortly before his death. But the damage had already been done. There were many other racist theorists like António Gonçalves Videira, João Teixeira das Neves, Brito Camacho, and José Osório de Oliveira. Today, most of their theories have no room in post-colonial societies.

Although these theories seem to have sunk into oblivion, imperialist discourses managed to sift themselves through and have negatively influenced many thinkers in this process. Many of these thinkers authored anthropological theories which became controversial. Colonial attitudes, languages, theories and discourses against or in favour of colonialism. The relationship between colonizers and colonized people became a very complex 'melting pot' of cultural hegemony, imperialism, exploitation and resistance. As put by Said,

To some extent of course the debate involves definitions and attempts at delimitations of the very notion itself: was imperialism principally economic,

³⁸⁶ Manuel Pinheiro Chagas in *Os Sertões d'África* by Alfredo de Sarmiento (Lisboa: Editora Proprietário, Francisco Artur da Silva, 1880, pp. 7 – 8. Available online <https://archive.org/details/ossertesdafrica00sarmgoog> accessed in 2016.

³⁸⁷ Alfredo de Sarmiento, *Os Sertões d'África*, 1880, p. 89.

³⁸⁸ See cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/conhecer/biblioteca-digital-camoes/estudos...critica/file.html accessed in 2014

³⁸⁹ Henrique Galvão, *O Vélo d'oiro*, 4.^a ed., 1936, p. 122.

³⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 34.

³⁹¹ Hipólito Raposo, *Ana a Kalunga*, 1926, p. 21.

how far it extended, what were its causes, was it systematic, when (or whether) it ended?³⁹²

These questions gave rise to a new form of theorizing the word “imperialism”. A new concept emerged in the cultural and literary studies in the period after colonialism: post-colonialism. Post-colonial studies seemed to develop as a way of addressing the cultural production of those societies affected by the historical phenomenon of colonialism. They tried to analyse the strategies in which colonized societies have determined imperial discourse. They also addressed the ways in which many of those strategies were shared by colonized societies, re-emerging in very different political and cultural circumstances. Theorists like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Bill Ashcroft and others contested in the late 1980s over the meaning of the term itself.

Post-colonial theory was accused of appearing as the latest master narrative, the explanation of all forms of oppression. On the one hand, it seemed to value the colonial dominance of Europe in the last two centuries. On the other hand, it seemed to construct the cultural productions of formerly colonised and now neo-colonised states as reactive rather than proactive, as suggested by Bill Ashcroft.³⁹³ Ashcroft defends that these two positions seem to lock the resistance of post-colonised societies into a ‘prison of protest’, whereas this form of resistance to imperial hegemony, cultural hegemony and also to its discourse was one strategy adopted to react to European power. Ashcroft believes that the responses of colonized societies to the discourses that have inscribed them and regulated their global reality have been of transformation. As he says,

It is transformation that gives these societies control over their future. Transformation describes the ways in which colonized societies have taken dominant discourses, transformed them and used them in the service of their own self-empowerment... This is nowhere more obvious than in literary and other representational arts such as music, dance, science, design, movies, politics and so forth.³⁹⁴

Culture had a privileged role in the past and in the modern imperial experiences. This means that one of the most negative impacts of colonization in Africa was on culture rather than on economy, for example. Considerable shadows of that impact are on the life of subjugated people.

³⁹² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage Books, 1994, p.3. For this discussion in Europe and America see names like Kautsky, Hilferding, Luxemburg, Hobson, Lenin, Shumpeter, Arendt, Magdoff, Paul Kennedy, William Appleman Williams, Gabriel Kolko, Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Walter Lefebvre.

³⁹³ Bill Ashcroft, *On Post-colonial Futures: Writing Past Colonialism*, London: Continuum, 2001, p. 1.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, 1.

Each individual has something imperialist in him or her, such as: language, food, clothing, science, technology, the dreams and education. Huge parts of Africa were shared among the British, the French, the Portuguese, the Spanish, the German and the Dutch empires. Britain and France alone controlled the largest territories in the world. Said believes that,

This pattern of dominions or possessions laid the groundwork for what is in effect now a fully global world. Electronic communications, the global extent of trade, of availability of resources, of travel, of information about weather patterns corners of world. This set of patterns, I believe, was first established and made possible by the modern empires.³⁹⁵

Most of the arguments of the empire were founded on land possession, a right believed to be naturally justified and divinely granted. So, the empires planned to have more and more territory since it was seen as a divine right. Therefore, they had to do something about their indigenous residents.

In this context, as Said proposes, “imperialism meant thinking about, settling on, and controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others.”³⁹⁶ There is a common belief that the ‘age of empire’, a term coined by Eric Hobsbawn, ended after the World War II, when the great colonial structures collapsed, paving the way to independence movements and eventually to independence days for many African countries. But it is definitely not as true as it is claimed. Richard Van Alstyne’ *Rising American Empire* has proved it to the full. The American dream and attitude of dominion and greatness shown towards other cultures and people in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are proofs that the imperialist powers and discourses did not disappear despite great efforts.

It is not only the empires that built the colonies but the colonies also played great roles in the imagination, economy, political life, and social “fabric” of British and French society. We can mention names like Delacroix, Edmund Burke, Ruskin, Carlyle, James and John Stuart Mill, Kipling, Balzac, Nerval, Flaubert, or Conrad. These talented thinkers produced the discourses that helped the empires

³⁹⁵ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 4.

³⁹⁶ Said strongly observed that this pretense of the imperialist powers believing that they had the natural and divine right to conquer and dominate was even backed by poets. For example, the sixteenth-century poet Edmund Spenser had bloodthirsty plans for Ireland, where he imagined a British army virtually exterminating the native inhabitants, with his poetic achievement or with the history of British rule over Ireland, which continues today, see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 4.

at stake to settle, expand and multiply themselves. Most of these discourses were full of prejudices and they contributed to demote the whole African continent as it continues to be experienced today: stopping African migrants from crossing the Mediterranean Sea, the ignored problem of Ebola in the West and East Africa and ethnic conflicts in Central Africa.

Nonetheless, it is important to highlight how well the colonized societies have appropriated dominant technologies and discourses and how they used them in projects of self-representation. This self-representation has occurred in educational disciplines, such as history, geography, language, writing and other forms of cultural production. Those discourses and technologies were adapted to local needs. This transformation that Ashcroft talks about is not static but dynamic. The areas of cultural life in which dynamic transformation has had an effect are endlessly diverse: in religion, education, technology, science, politics, economy, anthropology, literature, military cooperation, diplomacy, culture, public health, social affairs and housing.

Religion has been one of the most dynamic areas of cultural life in Africa. Christianity and Islam are leading in terms of the number of religious followers. There are, for example, more Christian followers in Sub-Saharan Africa than in the North and East Africa put together. Today, these two religions are seen as symbols of cultural representation and, in the extreme cases, as symbols of national identities.

Christianity and Islam represent both Western and Eastern civilizations. The divine word and the cultural practices are part of the message they have brought to their converts. This message was often aggressive to the local cultural practices. They were usually attacked as pagan and animist. Contrastingly, it is the same Christianity that seemed to have also brought pagan Western cultural practices to Africa.

Take Christmas, for example, a celebration held in commemoration of Christ's birth. As far as we know, Christmas is ahistorical. No one knows the day Jesus was born. The date of December 25th corresponded with several pagan festivals that took place around the time of the winter solstice. It was the Bishop of Rome Liberius in AD 354, who told Christians to establish a festival on the 25th of December.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ See Ndirangu Mwauru, *Kenya Today: Breaking the Yoke of Colonialism in Africa*, New York: Algora Publishing, 2005. Northern European tribes celebrated their chief festival of Yule to commemorate the sun's rebirth; the Romans had a festival called the Saturnalia, which was a celebration of the sun's birthday. See M. Ranji, 'Origins of Some Christmas practices,' *Young Nation Magazine, Sunday Nation*, December 21 1997, p. 6.

But today Christmas is one of the most assertive religious symbols of Christianity above all economic, creating a large market for imported Christmas goods. The card-making industry alone employs up to half a million workers in Europe. Christmas fuels the world's biggest shopping season in Europe, Africa and the entire world. It has become a sign of cultural imperialism. Everywhere you go in Africa, you find the traces of Christmas, even in most primitive areas and communities, such as Kuvale and San. It is interesting to notice how Christmas celebrations have been changed by local African Christian communities. In some, baby Jesus is no longer white but black, representing the woes and pains endured by black people because of poverty and social exclusion during colonization and nowadays.

Also, let us take Easter. The term Easter cannot be found in the bible. It might have come from the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess, Eostre.³⁹⁸ Today, eggs are part of this celebration as a symbol of new life and springtime. They are decorated with the sun's rays in imitation of earlier worship of the sun. Eventually, chocolate was added to this pagan ritual after the Catholic Europeans under Don Hernando Cortes invaded the Aztec Empire. The Aztec used cocoa beans to produce a brew called chocolate, and it was used in connection with human sacrifice.³⁹⁹ I believe that chocolate was specifically used in Easter because Easter involves a human sacrifice – Christ.

Christian worship also involves the use of material objects such as images of angels, Mary in rosaries, Jesus in crosses and saints in clay which is raising questions of idolatry as well as of commercialism. In such images the devil is often depicted as black. Conversely, should this not be white? Curiously, some African beliefs go even as far as to depict Mary the mother of Jesus and Jesus himself as black.

In the past, African religions were depicted as pagan by most of missionaries for involving in their celebrations the worship of images of their local gods and goddesses. But the propaganda brought by missionaries was so powerful that Africans abandoned their idols and embraced the Western and Eastern ones. Today, this industry of manufactured images provides thousands of jobs to Westerners as well as Africans and is a great source of income.

³⁹⁸ Watch Tower Bible Tract Society of Pennsylvania, *The Truth that leads to Eternal Life*, New York, 1968; see also www.answeringenesis.org/holidays/easter/is-the-name-easter-of-pagan-origin/ accessed in 2017.

³⁹⁹ See www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/a-brief-history-of-chocolate-2186091/ accessed in 2016.

In opposition to what was found, during colonialism, European missionaries aimed at 'civilizing' Africans through the systematic destruction of African culture and they tried to replace it with European culture. Today some Christian denominations are also demolishing African culture through the use of immoderate doctrines theologically backed up by the Bible itself. Polygamy, prostitution, witchcraft, sorcery, traditional healing, honour-killing and revenge are sometimes referred to this way. Unfortunately, all this is done in the name of God.

The consequences of the encounter between Western Christianity and African cultures have been endlessly diverse and unpredictable. One consequence of this encounter is felt in the traditional naming system which was changed in most African countries. As we know, names are one of the oldest and most fundamental ways of proclaiming identity and affiliation. Yet, European names are routinely given, or adopted, by Africans as beautiful and civilizing. Certain African people believe that there is such a thing as Christian names, which are holier than the African names they are identified with. There are people who have rejected all their African names as a result. They feel uncomfortable when called by the African names they rejected: *Nbwa*, *Cassova*, *Tchilunlu*, *Pessela*, *Chinua*, *Kakomba*, for example.

I said earlier that education was another area in which colonialism has had the hugest impact of dynamic transformation. Most of African educational systems are conceived and designed in the light of Western educational systems. In the primary, secondary schools and universities, the academic programs are inspired by the west and then locally applied. This means that the starting point and the point of reference have been Western educational systems since the beginning of colonialism. These foreign systems have informed and justified the African own educational systems ever since. This is one of the legacies left by colonialism and adopted by most African countries after that encounter. It is known that alien educational systems may have stripped the students their sense of identity and probably of right and wrong. Students may feel frustrated since what is studied is not culturally based and is difficult to apply. There is a sense of being alienated during the years spent at the University. You study geography and you end up as a taxi-driver, for example.

Despite that, in the postcolonial era Euro-American educational systems have transformed Africa into a competitive continent in various social spheres. This is because there are more and more African universities adopting Western academic curricula as a way of ascending to the world educational ranking and being a little more like western countries. In most cases, this is achieved through the usage of English language and Western technologies.

English, in some respect, symbolizes the hegemony of imperial culture, and also its transformation by post-colonial writers and critics in Europe, America, Asia and Africa. Someone who can speak English is always better than the one who does not speak it. A sense of prestige is attached to it. It is seen as the main vehicle to convey western cultural civilization.

In Africa, languages were appropriated and have been transformed by those very societies in which they were promoted. Chinua Achebe learnt, used and transformed the British English language into an African English. He used it as a tool to respond to the imperialist discourses and reaffirm African identity through the Igbo people. Portuguese language was used by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho to describe the complex world of the Kuvale people, their culture and language. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho mixes Portuguese and Mucubal in his text *Vou lá visitar Pastores*. New terminologies have been borrowed from such native languages to enrich the lexicon of the Portuguese and English languages.

In this sense, English and Portuguese are no longer the same. The appropriation of new terminologies and meanings has been so profound that they are thought to have lost their original British and Portuguese identities. The same thing can be said about other European languages.

As said earlier, post-colonial theory emerges as a result of a response to the flourishing literatures written by colonized peoples in colonial languages. Colonized peoples responded to political and cultural dominance of Europe by resisting to it through the use of their fists and pens. These means that “colonized peoples throughout have appropriated and transformed those processes into culturally appropriate vehicles,”⁴⁰⁰ says Ashcroft. “It is this struggle over representation which articulates most clearly the material basis, the constructiveness and dialogic energy of the ‘post-colonial imagination,’”⁴⁰¹ adds Ashcroft.

Writers are creative artists who express the imaginative vision of a society. The signs they observe, the music they hear, the dance they dance, the rhythms they create, the sufferings they witness all form the material basis for transformative representation, articulation and dialogue. This imaginative vision of society will form an identity, which can be cultural, political, economic or literary. These visions do not exist outside representation.

⁴⁰⁰ See Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation*, London, New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 5.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, p. 5.

African writers and artists used the dominant languages and discourses to express and oppose the most deeply felt issues brought by colonial experience. They resisted it by imitating the imitator. In this context, this form of imitation became the key to transformation and liberation. This is still a strategy being used today. In some cases, the oppressed are becoming oppressors against their own brothers and sisters, which is unfortunate.

But I can ask the same question Ashcroft did. “Does the fact of transformation, the capacity of colonized peoples to make dominant discourse work for them, to develop economically and technologically, to enjoy the benefits of global capitalism, mean that the colonized have had a measure of moral luck?”⁴⁰² as philosopher Bernard Williams puts it. My answer is negative. Although colonialism managed to destroy indigenous cultures, it does not mean that their cultures have remained a static reality. The positive answer to this question underestimates the resilience and adaptability of colonial societies.

That does not mean, however, that colonization was good for colonized people and that it had simply a civilizational role. Cultures all over the world confront each other or cooperate with one another. This has been a historical fact. Notwithstanding that, there were and will always be “winners” or “losers” in this confrontational process. Unfortunately, Africans appear to have often been on the “losing side,” and they still appear to keep playing the role of “innocent victims” instead of “waking up to the reality.” I am not saying that cultural confrontations are desirable and rightful, but that they are merely possible. Cooperation, however, will always be the best way to establish the relationship of one culture with another. But, unfortunately, this will not always be the case.

The fact is that colonized cultures all over the world have often been so resilient and transformative that they have also changed the character of imperial culture itself. Today, the European, American and African continents are “black and white,” a rainbow as a consequence of slavery, immigration and emigration. What these continents would have become had not been for “clash of civilizations” is hardly unanswerable and ultimately irrelevant for this thesis. Whatever involvement with this question would certainly be speculative and unrealistic.

Thus, from the discussion above I concluded that Igbo and Kuvale people seem to represent themselves as special and self-sufficient yet they seem to acknowledge and respect exogenous and cultural differences and constructions. I also explored the importance they attribute to Cows and

⁴⁰² Apud Ndirangu Mwauru, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

Yam. Cows are absolutely central to being a Kuvale and maintaining social cohesion and can certainly inspire contemporary economic models as I will show in the following chapter. For the Igbo, conversely, Yam was considered as the king of crops and everything else depended on it. The Igbo food industry and nutrition depended greatly on this crop. It seems that without Yam no life was believed to be possible among the Igbo. Yam was central to social unity and cohesion.

The discussion above also showed that colonization was disruptive indeed and has contributed in many cases to the anthropological misrepresentation of most of these conquered and dominated cultures, including Igbo and Kuvale. Despite that, I can still claim that these misrepresentations, self-representations and experiences can be epistemologically questioned and subjected to universal reading both in *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá visitar Pastores*. So, the analysis that follows is an attempt to explore it through a critical and comparative approach taking into consideration the convergent and divergent literary and theoretical aspects of both works.

Chapter VI: Comparative Approach to the Works under Analysis

6. 1. Introduction

This chapter addresses essentially the convergent and divergent aspects in aesthetic and ideological terms in Achebe's and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's texts.

It also answers the question about the extent to which these texts are important in the Nigerian and Angolan canons. It is a contribution to the critical and theoretical studies already done about African literature and ethnography, as discussed in chapter two.

This chapter begins with the ideological and aesthetical analyses of *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*. Since these texts have many possible readings, hermeneutical and literary criticism approaches are used in interpreting and understanding them. Equally, an assessment of the readership and its social implications is conducted.

The analysis of these texts will imply comparing the styles, the narrative techniques, the metaphors, the proverbs, the anthropological and literary tools used, linguistic choices such as the rhythm, the semantics, terminologies, norms, historical influences and political motivations, biography of the authors, the characters, the informants, the bibliography, pictures, cultural representations and myths, and so forth. Subsequently, the conclusion follows in chapter seven.

6. 2. Theoretical, Ideological and Aesthetical Aspects.

This subchapter describes the ideological and aesthetical aspects of *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá visitar Pastores*.

6. 2. 1. *Things Fall Apart*: Making Sense of it

Two major themes can be identified in the novel: the oral tradition and the colonization of Igboland, and probably of Africa as a whole. In other words, Chinua Achebe informs us about social life in the Igboland before, during and after the period of colonization and how its people resisted colonization. Achebe translates here the Igbo's experiences into a universal experience of 'clash of civilizations'. He writes a story that is believed to be historically real and not simply a result of fictional work.

Certainly *Things Fall Apart* does not want to depict colonization as a fictional phenomenon, but as a historical fact⁴⁰³ as experienced by Igbo people. The villages of Umuofia and Mbanta, which can be located in the Nigerian map, are chosen as the contexts in which all events unfold. Susan Vanzanten paraphrasing Adichie has said that

Adichie often situates her response to Achebe in the context of an inadequate historical education. In one interview, she confesses, "Growing up an Igbo child, I was fortunate to be educated, but my education didn't teach me anything about my past. But when I read *Things Fall Apart*, it became my great-grandfather's life. It became more than literature for me. It became my story. I am quite protective of Achebe's novels in a way that I don't think I am with any other book that I love" (VanZanten 97). Here was a book that was unapologetically African, that was achingly familiar, but that was, also, exotic because it detailed the life of my people a hundred years before" (Introduction ix). For Adichie, Achebe's novel resonated culturally and personally; it spoke of Igbo history and family history, "my people" and "my great-grandfather's life."⁴⁰⁴

However, the characters of the narrative are imaginatively constructed. They get involved in the story that Achebe wants anyone to believe that was true. As Biyi Bandele remarks, "Achebe's characters do not seek our permission to be human, they do not apologize for being complex (or for being African, or for being human, or for being so extraordinarily alive)."⁴⁰⁵ Vanzanten believes that there is clear historicity in Achebe's novel. As she says

Things Fall Apart's form, as well as its content, addresses issues of historicity. Its opening and closing paragraphs, for example, "illustrate the contrast between a history constructed by an indigenous people, and one constructed by the colonizer" (Innes 825). Emad Mirmotahari argues that the novel's historicity is performed through its multidiscursive form combining Igbo storytelling; colonial voices and narratives; and historical, anthropological, and ethnographic prose (375-83). Although it does not rewrite a specific text, *Things Fall Apart* attempts to correct past narratives, to present an alternative vision of precolonial life, and the impact of colonization and

⁴⁰³ See Emad Mirmotahari, "History as project and source in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*," in *Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 14, No.4, 2011, pp. 373 – 385.

⁴⁰⁴ Susan Vanzanten, "The Headstrong Historian: Writing with *Things Fall Apart*" in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (Summer 2015), p. 86.

⁴⁰⁵ Preface by Biyi Bandele, In *Things Fall Apart*, p. xi.

so to create a "history of African History" (Mirmotahari 383), one that legitimates the histories of oral tradition within a hybridized version of the Western novel. As Sofia Samatar writes, "[Achebe's] historical novels are ... deliberate revisions of the past; to use a much-quoted Benjaminian phrase, they are history 'against the grain'"⁴⁰⁶

In an interview in August 2002 in "An African Voice", talking about *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe explains the fundamental and far-reaching disruption caused to African societies and how the social order has once and for all been altered as a result of the European colonization:

The society of Umuofia, the village in *Things Fall Apart*, was totally disrupted by the coming of the European government, missionary Christianity, and so on. That was not a temporary disturbance; it was a once and for all alteration of their society. To give you the example of Nigeria, where the novel is set, the Igbo people had organized themselves in small units, in small towns and villages, each self-governed. With the coming of the British, Igboland as a whole was incorporated into a totally different polity, to be called Nigeria, with a whole lot of other people with whom the Igbo people had not had direct contact before. The result of that was not something from which you could recover, really. You had to learn a totally new reality, and accommodate yourself to the demands of this new reality, which is the state called Nigeria. Various nationalities, each of which had its own independent life, were forced by the British to live with people of different customs and habits and priorities and religions. And then at independence, fifty years later, they were suddenly on their own again. They began all over again to learn the rules of independence. The problems that Nigeria is having today could be seen as resulting from this effort that was initiated by colonial rule to create a new nation."⁴⁰⁷

Achebe raises an interesting point common to almost all African nation-states once under colonial powers: colonial and post-colonial rulings. The division of Africa during the Berlin conference transformed Africa in an unstable continent with tribal wars and ethnic and political conflicts as a consequence. What Achebe seems to be saying in this interview is that the alteration of African

⁴⁰⁶ Susan Vanzanten, "The Headstrong Historian: Writing with *Things Fall Apart* in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Summer 2015, p. 87.

⁴⁰⁷ Published in *The Atlantic Online*, available through the EDSITEment-reviewed resource Internet Public Library (Last access, 26/06/2012).

societies forced people to relearn how to live together in the colonial as well as in the post-independent societies.

Diana Rhoads commenting on it in her article says that

Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* represents the cultural roots of the Igbos in order to provide self-confidence, but at the same time he refers them to universal principles which vitiate their destructive potential. Seeing his duty as a writer in a new nation as showing his people the dignity that they lost during the colonial period, he sets out to illustrate that before the European colonial powers entered Africa, the Igbos "had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty; that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity."⁴⁰⁸

However, Rhoads goes on to say that

Achebe cannot achieve his goal merely by representing difference; rather he must depict an Igbo society which moderns can see as having dignity. What is remarkable about his Igbos is the degree to which they have achieved the foundations of what most people seek today - democratic institutions, tolerance of other cultures, a gender-balance of male and female principles, capacity to change for the better or to meet new circumstances, a just means of redistributing wealth, a viable system of morality, support for industriousness, an effective system of justice, striking and memorable poetry and art."⁴⁰⁹

But Diana Rhoads warns that "Achebe appears to have tested Igbo culture against the goals of modern liberal democracy and to have set out to show how the Igbo meet those standards"⁴¹⁰

In addition to representing elements of common humanity, Achebe emphasizes certain basic political institutions which might form the foundation of a modern African state. Written at a time when Nigeria was about to achieve its independence from Britain, *Things Fall Apart* looks like the work of a founder of a state. Achebe believed that "art has a social purpose and can influence things"⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ Diana Akers Rhoads, "Culture in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" in *African Studies Review*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Sep., 1993), pp. 61-72. Published by: African Studies Association. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/524733>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:26.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 62 – 63.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, p. 63.

⁴¹¹ See Raoul Granqvist ed. 1990. "Travelling: Chinua Achebe in Scandinavia". *Swedish Writers in Africa*. Siden: Umea University, p. 28

Diana Rhoads alerts to the fact that

Critics who have warned of the dangers of presenting a Eurocentric vision of Achebe's novel and/or have advised immersing students in African culture as a means of getting them to recognize and appreciate difference among cultures might object to the focus here (for example, Nichols, Traore and Lubiano in Lindfors 1991). These critics are correct in noting that one of Achebe's aims is to present the peculiarities of the Igbo culture, especially the beauties and wisdom of its art and institutions, though Achebe also presents its weaknesses which require change and which aid in its destruction."⁴¹²

Notwithstanding that, the text of *Things Fall Apart* seems to tell the story of the slow colonization of Africa in the hands of European 'conquistadores'. Achebe's first reference to the character Ikemefuna as "ill-fated,"⁴¹³ at the end of Chapter 1, predicts the boy's death and Okonkwo's son Nwoye's troubled response in Chapter 7, which in turn predicts Nwoye's conversion to Christianity and joining the missionaries in Chapter 16. In Chapters 16 through 18, Achebe indicates the ways in which the Europeans separated Nigerians of different clans and ethnic backgrounds and turned them against their own people and villages through their appeal to the village outcasts and by "teaching young Christians to read and write."

Another example of how Achebe foreshadows the alteration of indigenous society is the replacement by "the white man's court" of the clan's customs with their own laws, discussed in Chapter 20. Obierika explains: "He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart."

Precisely, in *Things Fall Apart*, the colonization of the Igboland and Africa in general is dealt with from chapter 15 to chapter 25. The first signs of that fall to the white power come to Abame when the first white man appears. Elders of the village consulted the Oracle and were told that the white man would soon be followed by others like him and that he could destroy their way of living. Achebe emphasizes here *destroy their way of living*. With that, tragedy was inevitable in Igbo society as well as in all Africa.

⁴¹² Ibid, p. 28.

⁴¹³ See Neil Ten Kortenaar, "Becoming African and the Death of Ikemefuna" in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 2, Spring 2004, pp. 773 – 794.

One theme that appears over and over again in Achebe's writings is that of our perceptions and the stories we tell. According to him, these stories and perceptions are shaped by our social and cultural contexts, and he emphasizes that, "those that have been written about should also participate in the making of these stories" ("An African Voice").

From this perspective, I think that Achebe writes his own history of colonization in order to present a perspective opposite to that taught in the Western literary and historical traditions. Thus, the text of *Things Fall Apart* provides a range of perspectives through its narrator and many characters to retell that local version of the history of colonization in Africa.

"So they killed him. Not long after that, other white men came massacred the people of the village because they killed the first white man who came to their village (chapter 15 on)..."⁴¹⁴ Colonization finally drives Okonkwo to take his own life because the oppression was too great for his divided tribe to overcome. Okonkwo can't take living under the rule of foreign men who don't speak his language or know his customs. So rather than bear the 'yoke' of colonization, he hangs himself in chapter 25.⁴¹⁵

6. 2. 1. 1. Narrative strategies, literary styles and interpretation

In an interview in the 1994-95 issue of *The Paris Review*, Chinua Achebe states that he became a writer in order to tell his story and the story of his people from his own perspective. He explains the danger of having one's story told only by others through the following proverb: "until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." Critics and Achebe's own essays have portrayed *Things Fall Apart* as a response to the ideologies and discursive strategies of colonial texts such as Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

This way Achebe represents African people and his text depicts the African cultural landscape. He uses narrative techniques that contest colonialist discourse. Some examples are Achebe's use of simple prose and a restrained mode of narration; the omission of exotic descriptions; creation of subjectivity for his major characters; inclusion of a specific cultural and temporal context of the Igbo and Umuofia; presentation of the complexities and the contradictions of a traditional Igbo

⁴¹⁴ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*... p. 102.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 149 – 150.

community without idealizing it; introduction of white Europeans into the story from the Igbo population's perspective.

Achebe also seems to be probably 'resisting' and 'transforming' colonization and racism into something positive so as to give rise to a new African perspective completely demystified. Clear evidences of this resistance against colonization and racism are found in his essay "Achebe on Racism in *Heart of Darkness*."⁴¹⁶

The literal 'heart of darkness' in Conrad's novel "*Heart of Darkness*" does not merely incorporate the Belgian Congo, the African "savages", the journey to the innermost soul, it also depicts England as the corruptor in its attempted colonization of the African people for selfish and commercial purposes. In "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," Achebe accuses Conrad of racism as the essential "heart of darkness."

'Heart of Darkness' projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's praised intelligence and refinement are mocked by glorious bestiality...it is not the differences that worry Conrad.⁴¹⁷

One could also add to this chain of racism and discrimination Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden"⁴¹⁸, surely an alternate to *Heart of Darkness*:

TAKE up the White Man's burden -
Send forth the best ye breed -
Go bind your son's to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild -
Your new-caught sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child. (...)

⁴¹⁶ Available through the EDSITEment-reviewed resource Victorian Web. Accessed in 2013

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

⁴¹⁸ Available through the EDSITEment-reviewed resource The Academy of American Poets. Accessed in 2013

These and other ideas might have ignited Achebe to write his *Things Fall Apart*.⁴¹⁹ They constitute a brief but significant example of colonial literature. Note that Kipling⁴²⁰ is writing about India rather than African countries, but that both situations are examples of nineteenth-century British Empire and colonial relations.

In Achebe's account, Igbo society is described as big land with hills and cliffs, where good and evil coexist, characterized by arable and wild forests inherited from their forefathers. Subsistence agriculture is the main activity. The arable land is in the midst of a varied fauna characterized by normal changeable weather (rainy and dry), and having plenty of domestic and wild animals living there. Therefore, agriculture, business, fishing, hunting, marriage, palm-oil tapping, animal farming, recollection, wrestling contests, use of cowries (used as money), trade, bargaining, exchange of gifts, dowry or the bride price, selling of tobacco, exploration of iron, guns manufacturing (cannons, "matchets", I think Achebe means machete here, bows and spears), could be described as the most prominent economic activities and the source of income that characterized the pre-colonial period in Igbo society in particular, and in Africa in general.

Socially speaking, one could say that Achebe presented us a type of traditional society typically pre-colonial. From a structural point of view, this traditional society was mainly a male-oriented and male-structured society, i.e. paternalistic. Men were in control and, most of the time with the help of gods, the priests, the priestesses and the witches, they led over the rest of society imposing order and, sometimes, even disorder.

It was not a type of society based on the monarchic model of governance but not entirely as the traditional monarchies. In this type of society the kings are not needed. In fact, only the elders and the ancestors were believed to set up good examples as advisors, brave warriors and great leaders in times of difficulties and welfare.

Furthermore, one is confronted with a type of society where polygamy was socially approved and encouraged. Men could have up to nine wives, curiously living in the same compound, but living

⁴¹⁹ Of course William Butler Yeats must not be forgotten. His poem entitled *Things Fall Apart*, which Achebe adopted as the title of his book, might have influenced him. Yeats led the Irish literary renaissance turning to Irish myths and traditions for inspiration, but his poetry transcends national limits in its exploration of philosophical themes. Achebe did the same. *Things Fall Apart* is a novel inspired by Igbo myths and traditions. See Mariella Ansaldo, opus cit. in Bibliography.

⁴²⁰ To elucidate Kipling's view of British Imperialism, read the essays "Kipling's Imperialism" and "The British Empire in Kipling's Day," available through the EDSITEment-reviewed resource Victorian Web accessed in 2013.

in their own huts without complaining or showing any contempt to each other. It seems that what counted was certainly how economically strong a man was to marry more than one wife.

Having a lot of children was socially approved and encouraged for economic reasons and prestige. As a matter of fact, whoever was not able to bear children was shamefully scorned. Bearing children was a sign of blessing and prosperity in the present and in the future. A man could be remembered eternally in his offspring.

Nevertheless, not everything was black and white. Achebe is telling a story of a society that believed strongly in good and evil spirits hovering upon their villages day and night, watching, rewarding or punishing the good or the wrong doers. People certainly feared all that and strived to live up to the ancestors' commands.

The evil forest, considered the shadow of their clan, was a place to be feared the most. Nobody would dare come close to it and most of the wrong doers or the ill-fated people and even twins born in the land were driven out there as a punishment and as a sacrifice intended to appease the anger of the evil spirits. Giving birth to twins was definitely seen as an unbearable curse needing urgent solutions.

This society also believed in justice, but also in the need of revenge when necessary. All justice system was measured with what the "Oracles of the Hills and Caves" had to say about a particular judicial case in need of judgment and sentence. Agbala who lived in the Hills and Caves watched, led, advised and punished their villages and villagers. As Achebe emphasizes:

People came from far and near to consult it. They came when misfortune dogged their steps or when they had a dispute with their neighbours. They came to discover what the future held for them or to consult the spirits of their departed fathers. The way into the shrine was a round hole at the side of a hill, just a little bigger than the round opening into a hen-house. Worshippers and those who came to seek knowledge from the god crawled on their belly through the hole and found themselves in a dark, endless space in the presence of Agbala. No one had ever beheld Agbala except his priestess. But no one who had ever crawled into his awful shrine had come out without the fear of his power. His priestess stood by the sacred fire which she built in the heart

of the cave and proclaimed the will of the god. The fire did not burn with a flame. The glowing logs only served to light up vaguely the dark figure of the priestess.⁴²¹

This reference seems to allude to the Christian doctrine of hell and purgatory. Could one say that Achebe borrowed this description from Christianity since his uncle was a pastor and he studied theology? Probably.

From this perspective, one can make a claim that this society was, unquestionably, theocratic and religiously based, and not politically ruled, although some type of social hierarchy is clearly identified. On the top, there was the distant Chukwu followed by intermediary gods, then the spirits followed by wealthy people, the elders and, finally, the village warriors. At the bottom, there were the women, the children, the non-reputable people, the ill-fated men, the slaves, the outcasts, the twins, the strangers. One is reminded of the Ancient Greek hierarchical society, described by Aristotle in his *Politics*.

Although it was primarily a theocratic society, it does not necessarily mean, however, that it was not somehow politically organized. For example, Achebe talks of some kind of communal mobilization of the village whenever it felt threatened by its enemies. People were summoned for such occasions and came together at the *ubi* (an open place destined for such public gatherings) to be informed of a certain course of action to be taken by the elders of the community. Remarkably, people responded to it in huge crowds and willingly. Whenever there was a war declared against them, they would cooperate and fight. They usually won it as a result of this communal decision. Here I see political propaganda and marketing happening to sell an idea, to influence a certain course of action. And it was usually done by skilful speakers who influenced the decisions which they wanted to take.

Achebe tells us that the secret of all this outstanding social organization was not a human endeavour but laid with the gods, the spirits of former elders and the living warriors who made up a cooperative network, bound together in a permanent sharing and communion among themselves, sending out and receiving approval for this type of social structure from the gods. It is not only how things should be, but how they were meant to be and accepted. So, Christianity, Christian missionaries and British colonial powers did not make any sense in the eyes of pre-colonial Igbo nor in the eyes of the whole Africa at the outset of colonization.

⁴²¹ See Chinua Achebe, *opus cit.*, p. 13.

As for women, it appears that these had full responsibility for their own huts in spite of their social bottom-position. Most of their life was spent in these huts when they were at home. Cooking and farming could be said as what defined their social work inside or outside these huts. But when it came to farming they were only allowed to plant coco-yams and other minor crops, which somehow also blackened their social position in this society. Yam, for example, was considered the king of all crops, therefore the man's crop, as mentioned in chapter five.

It is important to notice that this society was set up on the belief that each one of its members was responsible for their own destiny and each one had a role to play in society. I can hear the voices of functionalist theorists here, especially Emilie Durkheim's voice. But, Achebe noticed that the secret to social success depended above all on one's personal *chi* (will, spirit, power). Saying yes to one's own *chi* meant also saying yes to success. This communion of 'yeses' would bring happiness to one's life. Although this was meant to be a normal course of life in Igboland, sometimes plights were inevitable. They came one's way because he or she offended a particular god with one's behaviour.⁴²²

Misfortune would quickly follow unless order was quickly searched for and eventually re-established. The good thing about this society is that the specific priestesses and priests were naturally indicated to plead with the gods to offer atonements for the imbalances caused to nature. Such was the case of Ikemefuma's death. He was used as a sacrifice to restore the impaired order in Umuofia. Ikemefuma became his father's scapegoat for having killed an innocent woman who belonged to Umuofia. Killing innocent people was considered a great sin, and therefore, it demanded an equal sacrifice of blood from the killer. This is a rite which Okonkwo underwent as well.

During the day, people were supposed to go farming, hunting and fishing. Selling in the local market was also taken into account, although it was not as important as farming. At night, except at moonlights, they stayed home; women would cook for their family and tell stories to their children. Men would eat and plan for the future. Men slept alone in their own huts where also they usually worshipped their gods. They had shrines set up within their own compounds and worshipped their gods or ancestors before those shrines.

Sexual intercourse usually happened in the women's huts. But we are told of a situation when Okonkwo's second wife had been advised by a medicine man to have it in Okonkwo's hut, instead,

⁴²² Ibid, p. 20.

to prevent her from “ill-fate” from losing more children. This is the only time in the whole story the custom seems to have been broken for therapeutic reasons.⁴²³

The importance of having a high social status in the clan is manifested in the way they looked down upon whoever had no social recognition in the community. In chapter one, for example, Okonkwo extremely hated his father because he was a lazy debtor. Unoka had never afforded to purchase a title for himself or even to try to adopt polygamy due to his social misrecognition. As a result, his neighbours and his own son Okonkwo despised him. Okonkwo believed that his struggle for life was justified by his father’s misrecognition. Unoka’s primary joy was in music and merry-making rather than working and enriching like his fellows or neighbours did. So wealth was admired and searched for. But not everyone could achieve it without hard work and luck.⁴²⁴

Okonkwo chose hard work instead to move away from his father’s fate. He wanted to be seen differently. Most of the elders in Umuofia held him in high esteem because of this attitude. So they entrusted him with complicated problems of the community like looking after the life of a boy who later on was offered as a sacrifice for the crime committed by his own father.⁴²⁵

Okonkwo’s anger towards his father was, therefore, understandable whenever his father was compared to a woman for not holding a recognized title in his village. In this village, women did not hold prestigious titles as men did. So when men did not achieve a recognized title because of laziness, they were usually called women. That is the main reason Okonkwo wanted to be as distant as possible from his father’s bad influence. Instead, he looked for great people in the village to help him ascend socially.

Because of his recognized struggle for life, Okonkwo won himself high esteem and he was made a member of the secret society holding a position of the *egwugwu* for his village. These men who dressed like ancestral spirits and took part in the funeral of great men as well as presided over judicial matters for Umuofia were part of a feared secret society and were only present at the burial of any important man of their village.⁴²⁶ Okonkwo’s frustration for having spent seven years in exile

⁴²³ Ibid, p. 57.

⁴²⁴ Ibid, pp. 6 – 7.

⁴²⁵ Ibid, p. 11

⁴²⁶ Ibid, pp. 64 – 69.

which he believed stunted his social growth is also understandable. He always wanted to be there and become even greater.

As far as religion is concerned, Achebe sees it as an essential part of being Igbo. In chapter two, we are told that Okonkwo went to negotiate a settlement with Mbaino, because that was the first ritualistic act before one tribe declared war onto the other. In this case, part of the religious obligations was that the gods usually demanded atonement for sins committed against members of a certain clan, and the offending village or person offered the traditional compensation. For the case of Mbaino, a native boy and a virgin were used in whatever way the gods saw fit.⁴²⁷

In the case of *Things Fall Apart*, consulting the “Oracle of the Hills and Caves” was part of the Igbo traditional religion. Whenever villages had questions about the source of their misfortunes or the future itself, they consulted the Oracle and learnt the answer through its priestess Agbala. Her words did not go unheard. In chapter 4, Okonkwo is so carried away in his anger at his youngest wife that he forged the ritual of the week of Peace and broke the rules of kindness and gentleness that all the villagers were supposed to exhibit to one another during that week before planting began. Because he broke one of the sacred laws of their religion, Okonkwo was forced to make a sacrifice to the earth goddess in repentance. This ritualistic obligation was performed before Agbala.⁴²⁸

In contrast to what I said about the social position of women, who were viewed as properties of their fathers and then their husbands, in chapter 6 of Achebe’s book, I see that they could also be assigned very important roles in the religion of the tribe. Chielo is the priestess of the powerful god Agbala, although she was an ordinary woman of the village in normal life.⁴²⁹

In chapter 7, an interesting fact strikes me. Nwoye remembers passing the Evil Forest on his way home from the fields when he overheard an infant’s cry from the woods. That is when he realizes that twins actually were left there in the forest to die because their religion declared twins bad luck for the parents.⁴³⁰ In line with this, in chapter 8, Obierika warns Okonkwo that the earth god

⁴²⁷ Ibid, pp. 9 – 10.

⁴²⁸ Ibid, pp. 22 – 23.

⁴²⁹ Ibid, p. 36.

⁴³⁰ Ibid, p. 45.

destroyed entire families for sins like the one Okonkwo committed when he killed Ikemefuna because the boy had “become part of Okonkwo’s household.”⁴³¹

In chapter 9, it is also religion which dictates that a woman who bore child after child only to see them die was besieged by the spirit of an evil child who would re-enter its mother womb only to be born and then die again. The cycle was believed to only be broken if the child’s *iyiwa*, the stone that links it to the spirit world was found and destroyed. Sometimes medicine men were called in to try to discourage these children from returning by mutilating the dead bodies and burying them in the Evil Forest, but occasionally, the children were known to return with the scars of that mutilation at their birth.⁴³²

In chapter 13, Okonkwo was forced to leave his home and had his property destroyed because he accidentally had killed a boy. Obierika did not understand why such means were necessary for an unintended offense, but their religion did not answer his queries. He was certain that if they did not send Okonkwo away to appease the earth goddess, all the tribe would suffer for the sin.⁴³³

Religion is also mentioned in chapter 16 to talk about missionaries, certainly the core of the story Achebe wants to tell.⁴³⁴ The colonization of Africa was initiated by the missionaries. Missionaries came to Umuofia and began converting the members of the Igbo tribe. They preached that the religion of the tribe was only superstition and that they were in error to worship the earth goddess and the god of the sky because there was only one true God.

Many of the people of this land did not believe the missionaries’ claims and considered them mad, but Nwoye found solace in the beliefs that they offered, and so he joined them. The elders of the villages and the leaders of the clan were saddened by the derision of those who converted, but they believed that the white man’s religion would fade away in time.

And finally, in chapter 22, for a while, Christianity and the tribal religion were able to co-exist in relative peace, but the actions of a zealot brought them into conflict. Enoch tried to start a religious war and they had no other choice but to fight, but it did not work.⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ Ibid, pp. 48 – 49.

⁴³² Ibid, pp. 59 – 61.

⁴³³ Ibid, pp. 90 – 91.

⁴³⁴ Ibid, pp. 105 – 108.

⁴³⁵ Ibid, pp. 134 – 139.

Apart from these rituals, they also seemed to believe in one God, in just society and, above all, in a sentiment of pride for their cultural identity. When they felt that this had been broken down by the white missionaries and the whole social structure started to crumble and fall apart, Umuofia tried to stand together and return the blow received. Among the reactionaries, Okonkwo was one who stood up fiercely against the new invaders, although too late, to show his open discontentment and his fisted sword towards them in order to say no to strange beliefs from the British missionaries which had by then infested all his traditional society. He preferred death to shame.⁴³⁶

Achebe wants to make a point that there were some Africans who had never got along with the new religion and the power of colonial administration. Okonkwo represented these Africans who preferred death to colonization and who triggered the nationalist movements for independence of African “states” instead. Okonkwo hanged himself up because he did not want to witness the collapse of his land to the new civilization.

As a matter of fact, when reading Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* one can also certainly say that monotheist religiosity seems to have been a reality long before Christian missionaries arrived in the continent. The conversation between Mr. Brown (missionary) and Akunna (a great man in that village and who had given one of his sons to be taught the white man’s knowledge in Mr Brown’s school) about their own beliefs of God seems to shed light on the claim that the Christian God brought to Africa by the Christian missionaries was probably the same God (*Chukwu*) found there being worshipped by most Africans for centuries previously.⁴³⁷

The type of society Achebe describes also believed in magic. Magic was tremendously feared because it was not considered as a purely human creation but rather as the gods’ work through the evil spirits or their priestesses conspiring against good people. This fear is shown, for example, towards the people of Umuike, who “wanted their market to grow and swallow up the market of their neighbours. So they made a powerful medicine. Every market-day, before the first cockcrow, this medicine stands on the market-ground in the shape of an old woman with a fan. With this magic fan she beckons to the market all the neighbouring clans. She beckons in front of her and behind her, to her right and to her left...”⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ Ibid, pp. 148 – 150.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, pp. 131 – 132.

⁴³⁸ Ibid, p. 83.

Great respect was paid to the feasts of the clans. The main celebrated feasts were the “Feast of the New Yam” held every year before the harvest began, to honour the earth goddess and the ancestral spirits of the clan. New yams could not be eaten until some had first been offered to these powers...It was thus an occasion for joy throughout Umuofia;⁴³⁹ and the “Feast of the week of Peace,” a week observed in which a man does not say harsh words to his neighbour before planting crops in the earth. It was believed to have been commanded by the forefathers to honour the great goddess of the earth. So, breaking it was considered to be an evildoing. And whoever broke it, he or she risked presenting a sacrifice before the shrine of Ani. Okonkwo had gone through this ceremony as well.⁴⁴⁰

Judicially speaking, the crime was believed to be of two kinds: male and female. Killing a clansman, was a female crime against the earth goddess, and whoever committed such a crime had to flee from the land for up to seven years. There were no jails. Okonkwo had committed the female crime⁴⁴¹ because it had been involuntary.⁴⁴² *Things Fall Apart* is an authentic ethnographic description of Igbo culture and people.

6. 2. 1. 2. Rhythm and Orality

The aesthetic aspects of *Things Fall Apart* are also remarkable. As I have already said earlier in this chapter, it is a simple mode of narration. It is written in a simple prose style where the English language reflects the African verbal style with stresses and emphases that would be unexpected in British or American speech.⁴⁴³ Clearly, Achebe reshapes the English language in order to imitate the linguistic pattern of his mother tongue Igbo. Additionally, this prose can be understood through the concept of rhythm within the oral tradition.

In the opening passage of the novel, it is possible to notice that the narrator repeats words and phrases, both verbatim and synonymous:

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat. Amalinze was the great wrestler

⁴³⁹ Ibid, pp. 27 – 28.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 22 – 23.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 91 – 95.

⁴⁴² See Patrick C. Nnoromele, “The Plight of a Hero in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*,” in *College Literature*, Vol. 27, No. 2, Spring 2000, pp. 146 – 156.

⁴⁴³ See John Povey, “The English language of the Contemporary African Novel”, *Critique XI*, 3 (1969), p. 93.

who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights. The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water. Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. In the end Okonkwo threw the Cat." ⁴⁴⁴

Achebe's repetitions in this passage are a technique of the traditional oral storyteller, sitting and talking to a group of listeners around the fire in the moony night (though he is not a griot, or oral historian himself). For example, the subject Okonkwo he repeats four times, the modifiers well, fame, honour, great, slippery, wily, unbeaten, fiercest he repeats but in a variable way to add meanings; other words, such as those about the intensity of the fight, similarly are repeated to emphasize their importance and to contrast meanings: "seven years was unbeaten, engaged a spirit of wild for seven days and seven nights, every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms". The verbs and predicates are also repeated: threw a fight, threw the Cat.

Here is another passage:

When they had all gathered, **the white men** began to speak to them. He spoke through and interpreter who was an **Ibo man**, though his dialect was different and harsh to the ears of Mbanta. Many people laughed at his dialect and the way he used words strangely. Instead of saying 'myself' he always said 'my buttocks'. But he was a **man** of commanding presence and the **clansmen** listened to him. He said he was **one of them**, as they could see from his colour and his language. The other four **black men** were also their **brothers**, although **one of them** did not speak **Ibo**. **The white man** was also their **brother** because they were sons of **God**. And he told them about this new *God*, the Creator of all the world and all the **men** and women. He told them that they **worshipped false gods, gods of wood and stone**. A deep murmur went through the crowd when he said this. He told them that the true **God** lived on high and that **all men** when they died went before **Him** for judgment. **Evil men** and all the heathen who in their blindness bowed to **wood and stone** were thrown into a fire that burned like palm-oil. But **good men** who **worshipped** the true **God** lived for ever in His happy

⁴⁴⁴ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 3.

kingdom. 'We have been sent by his great **God** to ask you to leave your wicked ways and **false gods** and turn to **Him** so that you may be saved when you died,' he said.⁴⁴⁵

In this passage, the plural noun **men** was repeated seven times, the singular noun **man** twice, the word **brother** twice, the prepositional phrase **one of them** twice, the capital name **God** five times, the name **gods** in small letter and in the plural form three times, the complementary pronoun **Him** referring to **God** twice, the word **Ibo** twice, the sentence **He told them** three times, the expression **wood and stone** twice, the past verb **died** twice, the verb **worshipped** in the past twice, the qualifier or adjective **false** twice. And there is rhythm and most expressions do rhyme. Achebe seems to be doing it intentionally given that it is possible to identify this style of repeated words throughout his narrative.

Stylistically speaking, the oral thinking and expressions used in prose are usually rhythmic, with organized patterns, repetitions and antithesis, with alliterations and assonances. Why is the narrator using them? Presumably because repetitions are primary devices for memory and in such cases rhythm aids are important. Communication through these strategies simplify the story so that listeners can grasp properly the characters and the message.

As reminded by Eugene McCarthy, more specifically, oral expression is "additive rather than subordinative," "aggregative rather than analytical," "redundant or 'copious,'" that is, "back looping" by means of "redundancy, repetition of the just-said."⁴⁴⁶

Of course, Achebe's rhythmic textures⁴⁴⁷ imitate the African oral rather than the English literary tradition. Rhythm is an art present at the heart of African cultures. There is rhythm in poetry, dance, drumming, words, songs, and in life itself. There is rhythm in almost everything African do.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 106.

⁴⁴⁶ Eugene McCarthy, "Rhythm and Narrative Method in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*", in *Novel: A Forum of Fiction*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring 1985) p. 245, published by Duke University Press, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345790>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:39. See also Walter J. Ong, S.J., *Orality and Literacy* (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 34, 37-40.

⁴⁴⁷ See its definition in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: "The quality created by the combination of the different elements in a work of music or literature: *a closely knit symphonic texture*"; The quality given to a piece of art, literature, or music by the interrelationship of its elements: "*The baroque influence in his music is clear here, with the harmonic complexity and texture*" (Rachel Roe).

Read more at <http://www.yourdictionary.com/texture#7xvmJP41OLdPXIcF.99>." **Texture**, the concrete, physical elements of prose or poetry that are separate from the structure or argument of the work. Such elements include metaphor, imagery, metre, and rhyme. The distinction between structure and texture is associated particularly with the New Critics, especially John Crowe Ransom. See <http://www.britannica.com/art/texture-literature>.

Léopold Sédar Senghor wrote somewhere that “rhythm is architecture of being, the inner dynamic that gives it form, the pure expression of the life force” in Africa.

As far as literature is concerned, Robert Kellong tells us that there are many sorts of rhythm such as phonic, metrical, grammatical, metaphoric, imagistic, and thematic. Modern studies have argued that prose as well as verse has its rhythms, usually found first in syntax. This means that the “repetitions of syntactic patterns of word and phrase underscore emphasis (sometimes vocal) and suppresses of meaning.”⁴⁴⁸ Such type of repetition is the most obvious stylistic feature noticed in Achebe’s novel.

Syntactically analysed, these repetitions stress key words, often polysyllables in contrast to the predominating one or two syllable words, subject nouns, object nouns, pronouns and modifiers of these nouns, and verbs, with occasional stress on time or place. Alliteration also accentuates these repetitions: called and cat; fight, fiercest, and founder; Spirit, seven, and seven.

Furthermore, rhythm in Achebe’s novel is also thematic, structural and metaphoric. The three parts and twenty-five chapters of the novel are organized in a way as to show a sequential thematic connection. Chapter one through thirteen belong to part one; chapter fourteen through nineteen belong to part two and chapter twenty through twenty-five belong to part three. The end of one episode in one chapter works as an introduction to the next. All these chapters are thematically and structurally interconnected where one completes the other.

Chapter one introduces the hero of the story, Okonkwo. Okonkwo is a well-known figure throughout the nine villages and beyond because he defeated Amelinze the cat “in a fight which old people agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights;”⁴⁴⁹ it presents the main characters such as Amelinze the Cat, Unoka, Ikemefuna, Nwoye, Okoye and his three wives. His characters are strategically chosen in every chapter of his novel because of the message he convincingly wants to pass on to his audience by means of conversational and proverbial style as well as by means of well elaborated metaphors to be mentioned later in this chapter. As he justifies the choice of this style, “among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.”⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁸ Eugene McCarthy, *opus cit.*, 246.

⁴⁴⁹ Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 3.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid*, p. 6.

In chapter two, tragedy is announced by a town-crier using a hollow metal to gather at the *ilo* (the market place) in the following morning to let the villagers know about a death caused to one of their countrywomen. The market becomes an important place for gathering and passing judgements. An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino where the murderer lived, asking them to choose between war, on the one hand, or the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation to atone the crime, on the other hand. Since Umuofia was feared by all its neighbours for its power in war and magic, a boy called Ikemefuna and a virgin girl are brought by Okonkwo as a reparation. The boy lived for three years at Okonkwo's household and the girl replaced the murdered woman.⁴⁵¹

Chapter three introduces other minor characters such as Agbala, Chica, the goddess Ani (the owner of all land), the god Ifejioku (the god of yams), Nwakibie (the rich man who helped Okonkwo with eight hundred yam seeds which were meant to pave the way for his success in Umuofia), Anasi, Obiako, Ogbuefi, Idigo, Akukalia, Idigo, Igwelo which come to colour Okonkwo's life negatively and positively. The theme here is mostly around Okonkwo's desire of transforming himself into a highly titled man in his clan through hard work in farming in spite of his family poor origins.⁴⁵²

In chapter four Okonkwo breaks one of the most important celebrations of his village, the Week of Peace, when he beats his second wife for having left the children alone at home and gone plait her hair without telling him. He is punished by Ezeani, the priest of the earth goddess, Ani, and is asked to bring before her shrine one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries as a sacrifice which he did. Okonkwo's evil attitude is feared to have the force to ruin the whole clan, because Ani was insulted and she may refuse to give them her support. At this point, Okonkwo's good fortune is believed to have gone to his head and probably that is why he was thought of not respecting the gods of the clan. As a matter of fact, no work was done during the Week of Peace and no violence was expected to happen no matter what might be the reason. Ezeani emphasizes it to Okonkwo when he went to see and rebuke him: "your wife was at fault, but even if you came into your *obi* (house) and found her lover on top of her, you would still have committed a great evil to beat her."⁴⁵³ The main characters of this chapter are Osugo Ezeani, Ojiugo and Ogbuefi Ezeudu.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 8 – 9.

⁴⁵² Ibid, p. 14.

⁴⁵³ Ibid, p. 23.

Ezeudu is important here because he is one figure who, for the first time in the story, criticized the ritualistic excesses in Igbo tradition. Responding to his younger fellow who reminded them of the strange customs in some clans where it was an abomination for someone to die during the Week of Peace, Ezeudu adds: “in the region of Oboani if a man dies at this time he is not buried but cast into the Evil Forest” (the Evil Forest is another important theological or ideological concept in the novel to be explained later). However, the point is that Ezeudu criticized this custom which these people practiced. For him, these people seem to lack understanding since they ignored the fact that if “they threw away large numbers of men and women without burial, their clan would be full of the evil spirits of these unburied dead, hungry to do harm to the living.” Ezeudu appeared to be aware of the ecological problems as well as theological of this custom. He is a brave man for the fact of denouncing the excesses of tradition in a land bursting with feared cultural restrictions such as this one.

Chapter five is relevant for the fact that, for the second time in the story, Okonkwo beats up one of his wives, Ekwefi, during the New Yam Festival and he nearly kills her with a gunshot⁴⁵⁴. This time it was his third wife. But, this time also, he is not punished for that. People simply murmured and commented on it in private since they were busy with the arrangements for the New Yam festival. Despite this incident, the Festival is not interrupted.

So, chapter six is the festival itself. People from different parts of the nine villages, families and relatives, come to the festival bringing food and palm-wine to share the meals for three days. The second day is the most important one since it is when the festival reaches its climax with the wrestling match taking place. This time, it is the wrestling between Okafo and Ikezeu. Okafo wins the match.

Chapter seven is marked with the positive influence of Ikemefuna on Nwoye’s development as a person and Okonkwo was inwardly pleased with it since he had always feared that his son was not as bold as he wished him to be. Contrasting with this, the death of Ikemefuna is decided by the Oracle of Hills and Caves and Okonkwo and Ogbuefi Ezeudu were required to talk about it. Ezeudu warned Okonkwo to stay away from this assassination since the boy had been calling him father. Nwoye overhears it and bursts into tears. Sadly, he tells his mother who simply regrets about it. The sacrifice of Ikemefuna eventually took place later in the afternoon with Okonkwo being directly

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 27 – 29.

involved in it.⁴⁵⁵ Ikemefuna was hacked down with a machete and Okonkwo felt guilty and sad about it. He could not hide his feelings and his elder son finally confirmed his suspicion: Ikemefuna was killed by his father indeed. He wondered what kind of father he was to kill his own son. Ikemefuna was his son by adoption and Nwoye called him brother. Now, Ikemefuna was no longer there to play with him, to tell him stories and to teach him how to make flutes. Nwoye would now be afraid of his father and ran away from him whenever he came close to him.

In chapter eight, the psychological effects of Ikemefuna's killing on Okonkwo's conduct are still felt since he could no longer act normally. He could not eat and sleep for three days and nights. In addition to that, Obierika, his close friend, criticized him for taking part in the killing and warned him of the possible disasters looming and coming his way because of it. For the first time in the novel, the words 'white man' are mentioned in reference to European colonizers in the story told by Obierika. He referred to them while he was talking about the strange events which were happening in other villages where white men were seen troubling some people and seizing their land. At this point, the concept 'white man' seems to be historically new to these people. They even made jokes of it.

Chapter nine, ten, eleven and twelve are more concerned with the not less important domestic affairs. The sequential events of doom and plague against Okonkwo apparently seemed to be over. Yet, Enzinma, Okonkwo's daughter fell seriously ill because of witchcraft. Okagbue, the medicine-man, famous in all the clan for his knowledge in these matters, was called in and he healed her after a long and complicated toil. In chapter ten, the *egwugwu* (the supposed dead creatures) which represented the nine villages of the clan, appeared in the *ilo* to judge a marital dispute between Mgbafo and Uzowulu.⁴⁵⁶ The leader of *egwugwu* is called Evil Forest. 'Smoke poured out of his head. Evil Forest represented the village of Umeru, or the children of Eru, who was the eldest of the nine sons.'⁴⁵⁷

In chapter eleven, Ekwefi tells the tale of the Tortoise and other birds in the sky at the party where they were invited to. The tale is marked by the cleverness and cunning of the Tortoise who deceived the birds and ate all the food prepared for all of them by the hosts. Again, the word Tortoise here seems to make reference to the white men. I made reference to the African mythologies in

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 44.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 66.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 65.

relation to Tortoises in chapter three of this thesis. This tale extends through the whole chapter. Achebe also demonstrates how the story-telling practices had didactic and pedagogical purposes in the Igbo land, in particular, and Africa, in general. No formal schools are mentioned in the traditional Igbo societies. But, every day, parents had to tell stories to their children at night with an instructive and educational ending.

Chapter twelve is about the wedding of Obierika's daughter. The whole family and relatives are involved in the arrangements. The girl is sixteen and the boy is twenty-five. The woman is taken to the man's village after the ceremony. Everyone is happy since the wedding went beyond the initial expectations.

However, chapter thirteen retakes the theme of doom and plague against Okonkwo and his land. Firstly, Ezeudu dies. Ezeudu was one of the oldest warriors in his village. In his lifetime, he managed to win three titles in a land where there were only four titles to be won. Only a few men had achieved such a prowess. Because of that, everyone believed that an old man like Ezeudu was very close to the ancestors and deserved a respected burial. As Achebe observes, "a man's life from birth to death was a series of transition rites which brought him nearer and nearer to his ancestors."⁴⁵⁸ Secondly and worse, Okonkwo accidentally kills Ezeudu's son with a gunshot during the traditional farewell to their father before he was brought to rest. Nothing compared to this killing of a clansman had ever happened in the history of the clan. Okonkwo is in the middle of this controversy once again. Since it was a matter already regulated, in such situations, the one directly involved had to flee from his land and stay away from it for seven years.

Okonkwo and his household fled from the clan and went to his motherland. This crime was against the earth goddess. Fleeing was one way to appease her anger. Resisting it would condemn the whole clan to cursing and ruin. In the same episode, Obierika also raised questions about the sanity of such rules and traditions, especially against his best friend Okonkwo and his twin-babies thrown out in the Evil Forest since twins were considered an abomination⁴⁵⁹. This event triggers Okonkwo's slow fall and destruction as well as of his clan. His compound is set on fire, his houses and barns demolished and his livestock completely killed. This practice was aimed at "cleansing the land which Okonkwo had polluted with the blood of a clansman."⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 89.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 91.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 91.

Uchendu, Okonkwo's uncle, received him and his three wives and eight children in his motherland and he underwent mandatory rites and sacrifices for the crime he committed. This is one of main themes of chapter fourteen. Uchendu consoles Okonkwo for what happened and encourages him to accept the exile as much as possible since he was with his kinsmen. Okonkwo should know that he also belonged to his motherland although only when things were going wrong. Mother would always be fundamental to anyone since she comforted those who seek her for relief and refuge. However, he was warned that he was not the only great sufferer in the world. There were many more in bigger troubles. So he needed to raise his head and protect his family since seven in years in exile would go by quickly.⁴⁶¹

In chapter fifteen, the most important event is Obierika's visit to Okonkwo in exile after two or three years. During his visit to Okonkwo, Obierika told him how a white man on his visit to it had been killed by the native people of Abame and how this event brought destruction to Abame. Obierika reminded that this had already been predicted by the Oracle when it was consulted by the elders there. They were told that many more white men were on the way. Furthermore, it is clear from this chapter that there were already stories told about white men. They possessed powerful guns and strong drinks, and were taking slaves away across the seas. But most people considered those stories as false tales.⁴⁶²

Clearly, it is the chapter sixteen which addresses the direct encounter between Christianity and Okonkwo's crumbling culture. Obierika paid another visit to his friend in exile. But this time it happened in less happy circumstances. The missionaries had finally come to Umuofia. They built their church there, won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to surrounding towns and villages to preach their words.

Obierika explained that that presence was a source of sorrow to the elders of the clan. But there was great hope that the strange faith and the white man's God would not last forever since many of their converts were *efulefu*, worthless and empty men. And Chielo, the priestess of Agbala, called these "converts the excrement of the clan, and the new faith was a mad dog that had come to eat it up."⁴⁶³

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 95 – 99.

⁴⁶² Ibid, pp. 105 – 108.

⁴⁶³ Ibid, p. 105.

So there was hope that in a short time, the missionaries would be gone for good. However, what had triggered Obierika's visit was more the fact of having seen and talked to Nwoye, Okonkwo's son, now among the new Christian converts in Umuofia. This struck him negatively. Actually, Nwoye had been attracted to the new poetry back in Mbanta because he had felt something in his marrow, which made him believe that this religion had come to stay and console him of his worries and sorrows. But the new religion despised the gods of his clan. Nwoye did not care about it and this drove Okonkwo crazy. He was beaten up, cursed and chased away by Okonkwo from Mbanta. And that was exactly how he happened to be seen in Umuofia before the exile was over.⁴⁶⁴

In chapter seventeen, the concept of Evil forest is explained. In Igboland, each clan had its own evil forest. All those who died of evil diseases like leprosy and smallpox were buried in it. "It was also the dumping ground for the potent fetishes of great medicine-men when they died. An evil forest was therefore, alive with sinister forces and powers of darkness,"⁴⁶⁵ says Achebe. Curiously, it was such a forest that the rulers of Mbanta gave to the missionaries in which to settle, since they wanted them to perish and leave their land in peace. Surprisingly, the missionaries accepted the offer and thanked them for it. Days passed and none of the missionaries died. One would imagine how everyone in Mbanta was puzzled at this. And then, most of them believed that the white man's sorcery was extremely powerful. Not long after that, some more converts were won.⁴⁶⁶

Chapter eighteen shows how the native people started to question their own beliefs as a result of these incidents. Maybe their own gods and customs were not as sacred as they were believed to be. Maybe the new religion made more sense than theirs. Meanwhile, stories were already spreading across the villages that the white man had not only brought a religion but also a government. Even a place for judging native criminals had already been built in Umuofia and Umuru to protect the followers of their religion. It was even said that they had hanged one man who killed a missionary. An early incident that took place was the admission of the *osu*, the outcasts, into the church. This decision raised a lot of protests from the new converts who believed to be more deserving of this grace than those *osu* (outcasts), now also admitted into the Christian church. This almost blew off the efforts the missionaries undertook to evangelize these native people.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, ibidem.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 109.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 110

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 114 – 118.

In chapter nineteen, Okonkwo started to pack for his return to his fatherland. Although he had prospered in exile, he still regretted the seven years he spent in his motherland. Probably, he would have been more highly titled and much more respected for what he achieved in his own clan than in his mother's if it were not for what brought him into exile. Despite these pessimistic thoughts, he thanked his kinsmen by inviting them to a thank-you and farewell party because of the shelter and protection his family and himself received during those seven years in exile. Although Umuofia was no longer the same place after those seven years spent in exile, his return was full of hope.⁴⁶⁸

Okonkwo's return, however, is a sad one in chapter twenty. Umuofia was a different place now. People changed. There were new strange institutions there now: the church and the British government. Many people had joined the ranks of the strangers and abandoned their own gods and ancestors. They helped uphold this government. Things started to fall apart finally. And it was inevitable now. Not even the fiercest warrior of Umuofia could stop it. Would he have been able to prevent it from happening if he had been there?⁴⁶⁹

That is a difficult question to answer. But the truth is that "the white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen,"⁴⁷⁰ says Obierika. The same "knife" made Nwoye change his name, now he was Isaac; made one of the most feared creatures, *egwugwu*, to be desacralized in Umuofia by a clansman in chapter twenty-three; drove Okonkwo to cut off the head of one of the Commissioner's messengers in chapter twenty-four; and, finally, made Okonkwo commit suicide, which was one of the most abominable crimes of this clan in chapter twenty-five.

Evidently, thematic rhythms and cultural descriptions are noticeable in the way Achebe organizes the chapters and its main events. As Eugene McCarthy says, "the style of the novel and its structure thus draw attention to the exquisite tension between traditional English prose and the unique African and/or Igbo quality Achebe has created."⁴⁷¹ It is, as Lloyd Brown says, "a total cultural

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, pp.119 – 122.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, pp. 125 – 129.

⁴⁷⁰ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 129.

⁴⁷¹ B. Eugene McCarthy, "Rhythm and Narrative Method in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*" in *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Spring, 1985). Published by: Duke University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1345790>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:39 Your p. 255.

experience... the embodiment of its civilization."⁴⁷² And Achebe is well aware of this literary style and construction.

6. 2. 1. 3. Metaphorical and proverbial references

In addition to the literary style, the novel can also be seen as proverbial and metaphorical. The proverbs, the metaphors, the cultural myths are inextricably intertwined with the cultural experiences of Igbo society as well as with the African. Achebe uses proverbs, metaphors and myths directly extracted from his linguistic and oral traditions as a strategy to season his novel stylistically since he appears to have mostly written to an Igbo audience, although the corollary of his work went beyond the borders of Igboland.

The proverbs and metaphors from chapter one clarify his style. Achebe says, for example that «proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten; he who brings kola brings life; the sun will shine on those who stand before it shines on those who kneel under them; if a child washed his hands he could eat with kings; fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan; bushy eyebrows; the two or three moons; three or four markets; skirting around the subject». ⁴⁷³

In chapter two Achebe says that «when the moon is shining the cripple becomes hungry for a walk; piercing the still night air; vibrant silence; bellowed four times; to push the air with a clenched fist; he shot out his left and pointed in the direction of Mbaino; he allowed a murmur of suppressed anger to sweep the crowd; a sort of smile hovered more terrible and more sinister than the anger; Okonkwo worked daily on his farms from cockcrow until the chicken went to roost; incipient laziness». ⁴⁷⁴

In chapter three one reads that «a man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness; a toad does not run in the daytimes for nothing; an old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb; the lizard that jumped from the high Iroko tree to the ground said that he would praise himself if no one else did; Eneke the bird says that since men have learnt to shoot without missing, he has learnt to fly without perching; you can tell a ripe corn by its look; the thick dregs of palm-wine were supposed to be good for men who were going into their wives;

⁴⁷² Lloyd Brown, "Cultural Norms and Modes of Perception in Achebe's Fiction," *Critical Perspective on Nigerian Literature*, ed. Berneth Lindfore (Washington, D. C.: Three Continents Press, 1976, p. 133, cited in "Rhythm and Narrative Method in Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart'", p. 255.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, pp. 3 – 7.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 8 – 12.

the earth burnt like hot coals and roasted all the yams; the yam put on luxuriant green leaves; sinking under the load of despair; breaking the heart of a lion». ⁴⁷⁵

Furthermore, Achebe refers in chapter four that «looking at a king's mouth, one would think he never sucked at his mother's breast; when a man says yes his *chi* says yes also; Okonkwo knew how to kill a man's spirit; disquieting signs of laziness; thick sheets of water that earth and sky seemed merged in one grey wetness» ⁴⁷⁶

In chapter five, it is said that «Okonkwo's wives had scrubbed the walls and the huts with red earth until they reflected light; a dwarf wall of the barn; you will blow your eyes out; the drums beat the unmistakable wrestling dance quick, light and gay, and it came floating on the wind» ⁴⁷⁷

In chapter six Achebe uses metaphors such as «the drums rose to a frenzy; the people surged forwards; intoxicating rhythm; for a while drowned the frenzied drums; their bodies shone with sweat; the air, which had been stretched taut, with excitement relaxed again; I cannot yet find a mouth with which to tell the story; the drums went mad and the crowds also; the muscles on their arms and their thighs and on the backs stood out and twitched». ⁴⁷⁸

Again in chapter seven Achebe refers that « the sap of life; the sky withheld rain for seven years; a hazy feeling of sleep on the world; the blade of grass; sandy footway began to throw up the heat that lay buried in it». ⁴⁷⁹

Achebe uses more proverbs in chapter eight such as: «a chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches; a child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm; when mother cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth; if a I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play; marriage should be a play and not a fight» ⁴⁸⁰

In chapters nine, ten, eleven and twelve Achebe combines proverbs and metaphors such as: «barks of tree; bubbled with energy like fresh palm-wine; pandemonium of quaking voices; replied the thunderous crowd, then silence descended from sky and swallowed the noise; a man who makes

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, pp. 13 – 19.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 20 – 26.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 27 – 33.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, pp. 34 – 37.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 38 – 45.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid, pp. 46 – 54.

trouble for others is also making it for himself; a baby on its mother's back does not know that the way is long; his body rattled like a piece of dry stick in his empty shell; Tortoise had a sweet tongue; her voice cracking like the angry bark of thunder in the dry season; Ekwefi stood gazing in the direction of the voices like a hen whose only chick has been carried away by a kite; there are so many people on the market of Umuike that if you threw up a grain of sand it would not find a way to fall to earth again».⁴⁸¹

In chapter thirteen, one reads that «if one finger brought oil it soiled the others; message-laden night air; the faint and distant wailing of women settled like sediment of sorrow on the earth».⁴⁸² Once again, the proverbs and metaphors are present.

Yet, in chapter fourteen, Achebe used more metaphors. For example, «for two or three moons the sun had been gathering strength till it seemed to breathe a breath of fire on the earth; the sand felt like live coals to the feet; evergreen trees silenced in the forests, and the world lay panting under the live, vibrating heat. And then came the clap of thunder. It was an angry, metallic and thirsty clap, unlike the deep and liquid rumbling of the rainy season. A mighty wind arose and filled the air with dust. Palm trees swayed as the wind combed their leaves into flying crests like strange and fantastic coiffure; the nuts of the water of heaven»⁴⁸³

In chapter fifteen, he returned to proverbs to make a point. We find proverbs such as: «never kill a man who says nothing; there is nothing to fear from someone who shouts; there is no story that is not true; the world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others; never make an early morning appointment with a man who has just married a new wife».⁴⁸⁴

Chapters seventeen, nineteen, twenty-two, twenty three and twenty-four prove once again that Achebe wrote this book with proverbial and metaphoric references continually present in his mind. For example, «living fire begets cold, impotent ash; you cannot live on the bank of a river and wash your hands with spittle; an animal rubs its aching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him; the clan was like a lizard, if it lost its tail it soon grew another; Umuofia was like a startled animal with ears erect, sniffing the silent, ominous air and not knowing which way to run; as

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 55 – 87.

⁴⁸² Ibid, pp. 88 – 91.

⁴⁸³ Ibid, pp. 99 – 99.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 100 – 104.

a man danced so the drums were beaten for him; Mr Smith danced a furious step and so the drums went mad; the outsider who wept louder than the bereaved; his voice turned everyman into a lion; his sweet tongue can change fire into cold ash; the distance had taken the harsh edge off his gong».⁴⁸⁵

The words and phrasing used strike a reader. In the proverbs and metaphors which were applied, it is possible to notice that Achebe changed the syntax and semantics of the English language. In a discussion of his own prose, he illustrates, for example, how he approached the use of English:

I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a Mask, dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying had we known tomorrow.

Now supposing I had put it another way. Like this for instance: 'I am sending you as my representative among these people – just to be on the safe side in case the new religion develops. One has to move with the times or else is left behind. I have a hunch that those who fail to come to terms with the white man may well regret their lack of foresight.'⁴⁸⁶

Of course, Achebe does not explain the differences between these passages. However, he seems fully aware of the repetition of the 'if-clauses'. These 'if-clauses' create that quality of rhythm which we cannot see in the 'English' of the second passage. The phrasing was used in a colloquial rather than philosophical sense.

Thus, rhythm and meaning, as Achebe seems well aware of, range from emphasising a phrase or sentence to the structuring principle of a paragraph. The proverbs and metaphors in each chapter modified the form of the entire work. Through such a reading it is possible to learn about the nature of rhythm, orality and semantics (or simply meaning of words) and about the form of the African novel. Achebe has created a singular English and based on this, we may realize how British English has changed its grammar and lexicon in various African contexts either as an instrument of literacy or of communication.

6. 2. 2. *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*: Making Sense of it

Vou lá visitar Pastores is a text which expresses the wisdom found in the oral tradition of Kuvale people. Collecting this wisdom constituted a mission and a responsibility for Ruy Duarte de

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 109 – 149.

⁴⁸⁶ Chinua Achebe, "The African Writer and the English Language," in *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, pp. 101 – 102.

Carvalho. It was something that he believed he had to do. He planned a long visit to the Southwest of Angola to study these people closely. By doing so, he recorded anthropological data about them, revealing therefore, hidden cultural realities still waiting to be investigated. So, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* is a result of this anthropological trip around the Kuvaleland. As put by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho,

Cumpri a minha missão. Conduzi-te ao mercado da Nação e coloquei-te perante o sujeito de quase tudo o que quero dizer-te: os Kuvale, pastores, os Mucubais do imaginário angolano.⁴⁸⁷

This is a depiction of the Mucubals who are part of the Angolan society and imaginary. With this text, Duarte backed up once again the former scholastic claim that traditional popular wisdom can be literally reconstructed and translated into multiple readings in spite of long cloudy time. Hence, this text has become an irrefutable contribution to the debates of resilient issues, such as the rights to land possession, the protection of ethnic minorities and of their cultural representations, continually raised in social sciences and literary studies, respectively, today.

Vou lá visitar Pastores was written after most of African wars of independence were already over and when issues about culture and post-colonialism became relevant again. More precisely, it records the ethnography of Kuvale people, located in the Southwest of Angola. Duarte leaves his Portuguese origins aside in order to engage in a long narrative about the nomadic shepherds of this south-western region. The story is about their cultural life and practices such as their language, endurance, struggle, habits, behaviour, wars, slavery, customs, emigration and colonization. This story is not insignificant. As he states,

Gente singular, portanto. Singularidade, aliás, que acaba por ser insularidade, atribuída e assumida. Sem querer plagiar-me a mim mesmo, sempre que quero introduzir essa insularidade acabo por apontar para a maneira como um historiador da craveira de Joseph Miller se refere a eles, e a outros pastores do Sudoeste angolano, quando os identifica muito sucintamente como pequenas e distintas comunidades encravadas nos vales de algumas torrentes que descem das montanhas e que aí combinam para manter, a pastorícia e as culturas que a aridez e as areias lhes permitem praticar. Não deixa de ser verdade, mas é extremamente redutor, a dar sinal dessa insularidade atribuída que sugeri atrás. Da mesma forma que é, evidentemente,

⁴⁸⁷ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, p. 22.

reduzidor e leviano quase tudo o que vais ouvir acerca deles da parte das pessoas com quem contactarás na cidade.⁴⁸⁸

Vou lá Visitar Pastores, therefore, recaptures the untold story of the Kuvale people, their literary traditions including proverbs, fables, tales and other elements of oral and communal storytelling traditions. One is particularly intrigued by the resistance shown towards the colonial occupation. But yet, they managed to preserve their most cherished ancient traditions even as we write.

The Mucubals, as they are also known, are one of the most preserved groups found in Angola. This is completely different when compared with other ethnic groups like the Kimbundo, the Umbundo, the Kicongo and the Tchokwe peoples. These groups, however, were deeply transformed. Today, they are much more influenced by globalisation than the Mucubals. Some have even lost their cultural identity. They have lost their languages, customs and land. The Kuvale, however, have remained culturally unchanged despite the mighty colonial presence in the region. Of course, they are always facing the ominous risk of being choked and wiped away by the powerful presence of other 'modernised' neighbouring ethnic groups. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho explains

Sociedades pastoris como as do Kuvale, e são muitas e com muitos pontos em comum as que prevalecem em África e é nesse universo que te estou a introduzir, atestam a evidência, pouco cómoda, desconfortável, de que mesmo ali à mão existem outros tempos, outras idades, que em si mesmo constituem uma afronta do progresso, da adopção dos sinais do progresso. Por isso também, sociedades como essa são por todo o Mundo estrategicamente ignoradas, olhadas de longe, apenas porque assim talvez se revelem mais inócuas enquanto aberrações, anacronismos, descuido, na melhor das hipóteses e se não houver resistência, ou aniquilando, dominando, dissolvendo, igualizando e anulando, por fim.⁴⁸⁹

6. 2. 2. 1. Enunciative and Narrative Strategies

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho adopts two "enunciative" strategies, one combining politics and ethnography and the other anthropology and fiction in order to build his discourse. Firstly, his main argument is centred on the appeals he makes to study historically and culturally these nomadic

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 22 – 3.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 27.

peoples of the Southwest desert of Angola and to preserve their still very little known wisdom. He justifies it by saying that

Antes de partir para o deserto, e para além dele, à procura dos Kuvale, comigo se entretanto ainda me apanhares na cidade, ao meu encontro se eu já tiver partido, proponho-te o programa que já tinha pensado para ti: dar uma volta pelos três rios que, quando trazem água, desaguam perto. Eles constituem, em meu parecer, um roteiro excelente para ensaiar uma colocação dos Kuvale tanto do ponto de vista histórico, um passado que ajude a situá-los no nosso presente, como étnico, se quisermos dizer assim, e isso é o que posso muito bem tentar a partir do Bero e do Kuroka.⁴⁹⁰

Secondly, his argument, however, is factually and aesthetically shaped and reshaped, phrased and rephrased, sometimes interrupted and questioned, and then reanimated and reinterpreted as he writes *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*. He brings in new findings about these people based on the fieldwork itself and on his own interpretations as he was researching. But Ruy Duarte de Carvalho seems to invite his readers to go and visit or imagine visiting the places he is describing. It is as if one packed his or her bags to go on a long imaginative trip to the Kuvaleland with him to visit the nomadic shepherds about whom he wants to tell.

Ao Giraul reservo-o para uma tentativa mais ousada, e arriscada também. Ensaiei, a partir daí, uma interpretação – minha, claro, com o apoio de materiais inéditos de terreno – sobre o que poderá ser, em síntese, uma autocolocação kuvale no que diz respeito ao território em que se inscrevem a si mesmos, aos seus vizinhos, próximos e distantes, e à própria história, enfim. Para começar irás ao Bero, é o que te proponho. Procura na cidade a rua que se chama hoje Nzinga Mbandi.⁴⁹¹

To achieve that, he divided his text into small excerpts which resemble short literary essays or big informative chapters.

The first passage is entitled 'Memórias, colocações'. Here he gives the geographic, sociological and historic descriptions of places such as Namibe, Bero, Kuroka and Giraul that he visited and investigated. He underlines the strategic weight these places have in the ethnographic study he was

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 35.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, p. 35.

initiating then. The Kuvale people move around these regions. In other words, these are the Kuvale shepherds territories.⁴⁹²

The second part is called 'Viagens e Encontros: Figuras'. Duarte's main concern here is to present a precise piece of information about the physical environment in which the Kuvale practices unfold, about the social framework in which the Mucubals move and about the operational systems which ignite their most cherished cultural practices. The metaphor 'Cow' is explained. The clan and political systems are described and demonstrated. He talks about how the system of kinship functions here, in which the cattle are absolutely crucial. The Cow is the central symbol of this system. It is by means of those Cows that a Mucubal person grows up, marries someone, bears children, achieves prosperity, drinks and is merry, dances and plays, suffers and mourns, and gives meaning to life as commented in chapter five.

The concepts of *Bos sociologus* and *Bos economicus*, two concepts that support Carvalho's claims about cows for the Kuvale people, are introduced and the theorization follows. Carvalho also explains concepts such as *onganda* and *sambo* and the role they play in the nomadic life of Kuvale people. These concepts support the urban understanding of the Kuvale people. The understanding of nomadism and sedentarism among the Mucubals is systematic and instrumental. Nothing happens, is built or used by accident. Everything has a purpose.

All in all, the author interferes directly in the text. He recalls his memories of the place and experiences he had, as a shepherd himself as well, while he was living in the backlands with his parents. He uses subtitles such as 'Pico do Azevedo: onde dá para olhar à volta', 'Paralelos: e ver luz de noite ao longe', 'Virei: onde se cruzam figuras...' *Vitetehombo*: e se entra no sistema'.

The third excerpt is entitled 'Ethnografias, Torrentes', divided into subtitles such as 'Vitivi: pelo avesso do olhar'; 'Sayona: onde num óbito se fala de bois...'; 'Pikona: e num enterro se revelam coisas'; 'Bumbo: onde o assunto é casar...'; 'Evau: *vou lá visitar pastores*'. I think this is the central excerpt of *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*. It is within it that the title given to his narrative is found.⁴⁹³ It is filled with ethnographic and linguistic descriptions. Portuguese and Mucubal languages are often used in parallel.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹² Ibid, pp. 35 – 95.

⁴⁹³ Ibid, p. 260.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 98 – 182.

The author talks about his experience and expertise as an anthropologist as he equally emphasizes the role the journals play for an ethnographic investigation as this one he conducted. The journal is compared to a stethoscope in the hands of a young medical doctor.

Decidi que vou gravar-te mais cassetes. Já que não estás aqui para saber do gozo que dá acordar e ouvir a B.B.C. tão longe, nem para ficar como eu à espera do que vai acontecer, em lugar de trabalhar no diário como é costume meu a esta hora quando ando aqui no mato, vou-te falando do que for havendo. Um diário não é só útil, faz parte. Para antropólogo, diário é como estetoscópio para jovem médico, é emblema. Não o exhibe, mas também não dá para imaginar que se sinta inteiro sem manter o seu, digno das raivas de Malinowsky, da obstinação de Morgan, das repugnâncias de Bateson, das introspecções de Leiris... Esta primeira hora útil do dia é que normalmente lhe reservo.⁴⁹⁵

With the help of journals, he was able to record, scrutinise and describe social life and sociolinguistic patterns of the regions of Kuvale thoroughly, evoking the examples of former ethnographers such as Malinowsky, Morgan, Bateson and Leiris.

For example, the practice of *Vito-hola*,⁴⁹⁶ which is one way of exchanging information between the guest and the host, is underlined. The one who listens to it would only answer, *keto*, *baketo* (thanks). Carvalho informs us that this interaction is a way of stimulating a conversation with someone by thanking him or her for the information provided. That is how most of the news spread around the *ongandas* and *sambos*: «só não faz *vito-hola* uma pessoa que não tem juízo, que está fora do mundo e não sabe pedir nem aproveitar as informações dos outros».⁴⁹⁷ This way of interacting is part of the grammar of relations in a context in which the information solely circulates, so to say, from mouth to ears.

Furthermore, Carvalho uses his experience on the field to warn young anthropologists that there are no absolute rules when asking scientific questions. Anything can be an object of inquiry. So the most important attitude is to focus on what we are studying, expect surprises, be open to them and be prepared to change the perspective we bring along. A young investigator aspiring to be a senior anthropologist must always be suspicious of many things he or she hears from his informants. Not all

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 184.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 186.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 186.

informants are reliable when they answer the questions. In such cases, an inquirer should extend the interviews to as a great number of local members as possible in order to have many more options in terms of responses that exist about the issue he or she is conducting research on. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho states:

Não há receitas para inquirir, da mesma forma que as não há para produzir raciocínios brilhantes e originais, e isso é a única receita que me permito transmitir aos aspirantes a antropólogos que procuram interessados na minha experiência ou que nela fazem confiança. Quanto a mim, é quando o observador já fez a etnografia bastante – embora não suficiente porque vai sempre ter que continuar a fazê-la – para sentir-se tão de dentro que pode começar a situar e a comparar, passar à condição de etnólogo, portanto, que ele há-de ver-se envolvido numa crise pessoal tão comum a todos e matéria tão presente em tudo quanto é diário que arriscaria dizer que quem a não souber é porque afinal não é (e é tanto assim que até quem a não sofre dirá depois que sim). O seu mundo passa ser aquele, e ao mesmo tempo que os “observados” deixam de ser “objecto de observação” e se insinuam e por fim impõem como sujeitos, também ele passa a sentir-se, ou quer mesmo ser, faz por isso, um sujeito tão preenchido pela cena local como os outros. O mundo de lá fora deixa de ser mais importante que este e o que tende a determinar a busca que continua a desenvolver-se, agora mais empenhada e apaixonada que nunca, não é saber coisas com o fim de as situar nas grelhas do saber exterior, que perdeu importância, deixou de valer com referência única e dinamizadora, mas de apreendê-las para situar-se na grelha do saber e da interacção locais⁴⁹⁸

Moreover, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho raises also the problem of language barrier. In fact, there are also the problems of language difficulties, of uncertainties and of cultural conflicts, and of habits and etiquette that can emerge in fieldwork. Unfortunately, these problems are never completely solved.

E há depois o problema dos informantes, e o problema da língua, e os equívocos que surgem, e as colisões de cultura, de hábitos, de etiqueta até... O impasse nunca fica resolvido. Não é só a difícil operação de, para obteres resultados, ter que passar do cor local e do detalhe etnográfico à abstracção da análise, e desta à linguagem da

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid p. 195.

síntese. Vais ter que haver-te com as várias modalidades que esta linguagem pode vir a assumir.⁴⁹⁹

Each investigator applies his or her way of asking questions in relation to what he or she is studying. The way he poses questions will be conditioned by what he or she has learnt, listened and read as well as by his intelligence, by his worldview, by his attitudes, his objectives and by what he wants to achieve. His questionnaires will depend on all these conditions and tools.⁵⁰⁰

Despite his desire to discover all the mysteries surrounding a research question, there will be things that a researcher will never know or things that will be simply hidden from him. However, a researcher must know that there are some mysteries that he or she will have to learn to keep secret. Sometimes, he or she will have to conceal his or her frustrations because of that. There are things that one saw and wrote about because one heard them and was told; there are things one saw and wrote about without anyone referring them; and there are things one should really write about and there are things one simply does not write about for ethical reasons. I think this is what research is all about. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho states.

Ando a tentar desvendar certos mistérios, e a viver uns mas a poupar outros, porque há mistérios que é preciso preservar. E o inquérito é isso: há o que vi porque mo disseram, há o que vi sem mo terem dito (e às vezes mesmo enquanto me diziam outras coisas), há o que conto e há o que não conto e pronto!⁵⁰¹

The final excerpt is entitled 'Decifrações, Desafios'. This point is about Carvalho's conclusive remarks. Here he summarises and integrates his previous ethnographic references and divides it into four other subtitles: 'Kahanda: do outro lado da idade'; 'Malola: onde se joga ao sistema e o sistema se joga'; 'Tyihelo: e se resume'; 'Muhunda: e se desgasta e o futuro vem aí'.⁵⁰² For him, the Kuvale shepherds should be protected and preserved. He elects this self-colocation as his mission and the main reason for this ethnographic research. As he observes in his final remarks of *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*,

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 199.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid, pp. 196 – 197.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, p. 199.

⁵⁰² Ibid, p. 288 – 359.

Ainda quererás saber qual é a minha posição no meio de tudo isto? Campanhas, de qualquer forma, não. Estou pronto a esclarecer no que puder mas não me peçam nem que ajude a *domesticá-los* nem que pugne pela causa da preservação dos seus modelos e sistemas, que de qualquer maneira não seria a deles. No que diz respeito às minhas inquietações pessoais a seu respeito, que eu é que sei, tento situá-las num programa de vida que ando a ver se adopto e que tende a inscrever tudo na longa-duração, pré-conquista da eternidade. Estou a investir-me numa *teoria dos horizontes* onde cabe tudo. Mas isso é também outra conversa. Muito objectivamente em relação ao trabalho que poderei continuar a desenvolver aqui, depois do que apesar de tudo fui conseguindo dizer sobre razões que importam ao presente imediato dos Kuvale e dos Kuvale dentro de Angola, quer tenha sido ouvido ou não, quero ir ao fundo desse filão do gado sagrado e depois, se der ainda tempo, vou encarar o horizonte dos objectos, da cultura material. Para te voltar a falar, então, talvez exactamente do mesmo mas sem possível crispação. Não é só a salvação dos Kuvale que está em causa, é a minha também.⁵⁰³

Carvalho never made it to the next phase of his intended research about the Kuvale people, because he left this world before accomplishing it. He promised to create the “theory of the horizon”, in which he would fit everything he had been researching about the Kuvale. Someone will probably do it one day.

6. 2. 2. 2. Literary Resource and Style

Literarily speaking, Duarte combines ethnographic descriptions he gives with metaphors, in an epistolary way. Take the following poetic reference:

Agora que é cacimbo, é dessa pedra que dou conta de como o verde é tão discreto e integrado na crespa cor do chão e das ramagens que nada na paisagem se exaspera. São dias de suavíssima luz, a oriente, e a ocidente um sol velado que brilha lasso da fúria de arder...⁵⁰⁴

Take the passage which describes the full moon going down slowly to the horizon:

Estava agora ali, afastado um pouco da fogueira, a fixar aquele círculo de chão iluminado, a aferir a gradação do limite entre a substância do palpável e a vastidão

⁵⁰³ Ibid, p. 359.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 190.

compacta da noite. A adequação dos sentidos: a vista, durante o dia, o ouvido, agora. O silvo discreto das torrentes da brisa, dos canais do vento. Qualquer ruído acrescentado a estes, uma folha de capim cedendo ao rastejar de algum mínimo réptil, o indeciso progredir de algum insecto escuso, estava o alerta disparado e em guarda, indiferente contudo ao xordo dos chacais. Assente e a sós na caixa do silêncio. O vento só. Não chegas a saber se o das correntes de ar ou só aquele que a Terra há-de soprar embrulhada no curso da rotação que a leva. E há o rumor de estrelas a que por vezes, súbito, se acrescenta o grito, sideral, de algum astro candente. E o permanente caudal, que sempre entendi de esperma, da via láctea, suspensão morosa na uterina fluidez da noite. Até que a lua nasce a confirmar contornos guardados intactos pela minha vigília.⁵⁰⁵

Take the passage which is describing the beauty of Serra da Chela:

É este um local, e sobretudo um horizonte, circular perfeito assim, em que inscrevo desde sempre uma boa parte da minha ficção pessoal, aquela que me cabe dentro do quadro de que falei atrás. É tudo horizontal e extenso, rasgado, desdobrado em rasgos de visão, é a passagem que conduz o olhar e há uma leitura só, possível, para uma largueza assim tamanha, tal dimensão alargada: largar o olhar pela esteira oblíqua dos ocres que se cruzam vastos, rasteiros, velozes, sem fim nem começo, uns derramados de outros, depois soltos, a renovar matizes ao sabor do vento. É por assim dizer o umbigo do mundo, para mim, ali. Sento-me lá e decreto o silêncio, fico a ouvir só, a escutar o vento e a reler a imagem, a confrontá-la à última reelaboração que dela tenha urdido nalgum lance de desamparo e de saudade avulsa, vivido sei lá onde, na António Barroso em Luanda, nalgum quarto de hotel em Londres, ou encolhido numa sala de cinema, em Paris.⁵⁰⁶

One gets the impression that the poetic inspirations as a result of his previous anthologies are constantly recalled in *Vou lá visitar Pastores*. The style combines anthropology and literature with a creative lexicon.

Já tudo mexe, à volta, mas é ainda uma hora muito trôpega, sobretudo neste tempo de cacimbo. Mesmo nos *sambos* as família deixam-se ficar ainda à volta do fogo, cada um embrulhado no seu *cambiriquito*, e à medida que clareia, todos, adultos e crianças,

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 110.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 106.

vão deitando breves olhares aos animais deitados e tranquilos. Se o capim ainda abunda comeram o suficiente durante o dia e passam a noite a ruminar no *sambo*, caso contrário foram pastar de noite e daqui a pouco estarão a voltar de livre vontade, ou não andam longe. Quando chegar a altura e se tiverem desenrolado já o frio e a conversa da manhã, um homem dos mais novos endireita o corpo, espreguiça-se inteiro, lança um grito de ânimo, parte e vai buscá-los. Ele já olhou, já viu, sabe os que faltam: se está a vaca tal, então é olhar para o lado.⁵⁰⁷

This narrative is certainly a result of his frequent research trips to the Kuvale region. Because of this, I see it as a narrative of travel in which the anthropological and literary discourses meet each other. This encounter appears not to be an accident but intentional. Carvalho was an anthropologist and a poet, and he could not keep distance from fields of anthropology and literature.

In this context, his text resembles the European travel literature like those written about exploratory voyages across Brazil and Africa from the XVI to the XIX centuries. It is written in a style in which the days and progression of the research are recorded in tapes and journals as he was moving about in the land. Carvalho mentioned the names, the dates, the people he met, the maps he drew, the conversations he had with the locals, the ceremonies he attended, the questions and ideas that he pondered over, the photos he took, the notes he was doodling, places that attracted him and the books he read. The text is often written in the first person, using nominative pronouns such as, I, she, he, we and they. For example, I visited, I went, I read, I thought, I guessed, they do, we went, and so forth. Here is one example to illustrate this

Ora a discussão gerada à volta deste processo de circulação de gado, que registei na íntegra, é um repositório de informação susceptível de ser tido como um material etnográfico muito valioso para o tratamento dos mais variados aspectos que poderão caracterizar o universo kuvale. Todas as questões do parentesco, que é a instituição política pertinente embora eu continue a tentar poupar-te a um tal imbróglio, se revelam presentes, mas também outros aspectos de carácter colectivo, de comportamento e de cultura...Vi demolir a reputação de alguém que eu julgava pessoa influente, e isso explicava o facto de ele não ter aparecido, embora tivesse mandado

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 184.

recado que, sendo da *eanda* do falecido, disponibilizava uma cabeça para o pagamento dos *nampingos*.⁵⁰⁸

Because of that, this text can be called theory of self-awareness which is part of the methodology used by ethnography and contemporary literature to engage descriptions like this one.

Notwithstanding that, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho appears to be an open anthropologist as he visits the fieldwork. In this way, he seems to reinterpret the way of doing anthropology, which makes him different from former anthropologists like Malinowski, Franz Boas and Evans Pritchard. As he states,

Como quem não quer a coisa fui-te insinuando a existência de uma bibliografia sobre grupos do Norte da Namíbia que de forma alguma poderão deixar de ser tidos em conta por quem queira ocupar-se das nossas populações. Esses estudos existem e alguns estão mesmo em curso. Tenho tentado manter-me ao corrente e, por isso mesmo, estando neste momento a caminho do nosso Namibe, onde, espero, me vais encontrar, também o estou da Namíbia para daí ir até à Alemanha participar de um encontro, na universidade de Colónia, onde vai reunir-se uma grande parte dos investigadores de todo o mundo, mais de quarenta, actualmente empenhados em trabalhos sobre grupos *herero*. Também eles se interessam sobre o que tenho andado a fazer e dos contactos a haver poderá resultar alguma vantagem recíproca, mais susceptível de ser assegurada pela via das motivações pessoais do que pelos canais institucionais. Também eles precisam de informação recente virada para o presente *herero* da parte angolana e capaz de ajustar, e nalguns casos rever, a informação passada.⁵⁰⁹

His methodology seems to be closer to what D. R. Angelis has done. Here literature becomes both a creation and creator of culture with anthropology as the observer/reader/interpreter. The dual role of literature and the repositioning of anthropology allow for a multiplicity of possibilities in reading, writing about, and interpreting people, places and perspectives, real or imagined.

By crossing the traditional boundaries of the anthropological canon, the author seems to see fiction, poetry, drama and culture as intertwined realities. That is why he covers an array of literary and anthropological concerns from the more tangible ethnographic studies to the liminal discussions

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 209 – 210.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 70 – 71.

of ritual of the Mucubals. In a new approach, he appears to bring together in a common space those elements of both disciplines that remained distinct only because they remained separate. Ruy Duarte Carvalho writes:

Fugi literalmente dali e nem os magníficos bandos de humbi-humbi que todas as tardes cruzavam o céu chuvoso, azul-cobalto, em direcção ao Leste, me puderam evitar uma áspera crise pessoal, angústias de antropólogo, de nacional, de andarilho sem-eira-nem-beira bloqueado no espaço e nas dobras do tempo, enredado nas malhas da sua própria deambulação.⁵¹⁰

Carvalho suggests that these disciplines are not static, but instead they are fluid sites of shifting cultural currents and academic interests; that neither literature nor anthropology is a unified, self-contained discipline; that critical discussions in each field do not emanate from a single centre but originate from a variety of sources and intersect at various points.

Thus, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* follows a method. But, Carvalho appears not to conform to the method he uses in a strict way. Of course, he does not completely abandon the traditional conventions of these fields altogether either. He might have been aware that had he abandoned the traditional conventions, this could probably have put his narrative at stake. As he says.

Não sei se alguma vez me atreverei a investir nesse sentido, mas mesmo que o faça nunca deixarei de ter em conta o enorme respeito que me merece a obra e a postura do nosso missionário do Espírito Santo (Carlos Estermann). Mas quando consulto os trabalhos recentes de autores que se ocupam de populações namibianas e que incontornavelmente têm que referir-se às que existem do lado de Angola, verifico que utilizam a obra do Pe. Carlos como referência única, e de facto não poderia deixar de ser assim porque, além de pouco mais haver a consultar, ela está traduzida em inglês e em francês, e julgo até que em alemão.⁵¹¹

Every author aims at reaching a wide audience and this is done by constructing an image of oneself as a reliable writer. For this, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho does not leave aside the references of his former colleagues in the field of anthropology. In fact, he used the scientific methodologies to

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, p. 73.

⁵¹¹ Ibid, p. 71.

avoid his excessive subjectivity and uncontrollable presence in this ethnographic text. The passage that follows is an example of this.

A parte norte do território kuvale é de alguma forma excêntrica em relação à incidência maior do meu inquérito e das minhas experiências, tanto a recente quanto a remota, da infância. Mas no ano passado e no ano anterior andei por ali. De uma das vezes fui até Lucira e fleti depois para o interior, pela Mahandya. Aí atravessei o rio Carunjamba, para alcançar o Xingo. Estava a chover com força, corria água, mas dava ainda passagem. Quando mais à frente atingi o rio seguinte, o Inamandando, aí já não dava e voltei para trás, arrepiei caminho apenas para constatar que o Carunjamba tinha enchido também, entretanto. Fiquei dez dias retido entre as duas torrentes e só consegui sair dali quando achei que ia dar se recorresse ao processo de meter o carro na peugada de uma manada de bois. Revolvem a areia e a lama do fundo, enquanto atravessam, e deixam mais firme o leito do rio. Com tração às quatro rodas e aceleração certa consegues sair, e é a maneira de escapar a tanta água acumulada por toda parte e a toda a sorte de cobras e lagartos que em tais períodos da estação saem dos abrigos para refazer os ciclos que hão-de devolver mais tarde, novamente, à secura, ao frio e ao sono. Fugi literalmente dali e nem os magníficos bandos de humbi-humbi que todas as tardes cruzavam o céu chuvoso, azul-cobalto, em direção ao Leste, me puderam evitar uma áspera crise pessoal, angústias de antropólogo, de nacional, de andarilho sem-eira-nem-beira bloqueado no espaço e nas dobras do tempo, enredado nas malhas da sua própria deambulação.⁵¹²

What I can see here is that the author emerges slowly in the scene of enunciation, using essentially poetic descriptions such as “os magníficos bandos de humbi-humbi”, “o céu chuvoso, azul cobalto”, until he reaches the hard-hitting personal crises (“áspera crise pessoal”). The subject of this anthropological knowledge is revealed and appears in the text as a character in crisis, nationalized and nomadic, as he says: “enredado nas malhas da sua própria deambulação”.

The didactic intonation felt in that opening passage is a strategy that the author uses to back up his text. This results from the fact that the chapters which are written are recorded tapes left by the author to a friend, who lives in London (no explicit nationality is given, which means that this journalist could be anyone wanting to visit the Kuvaleland for research). This friend wanted to travel

⁵¹² Ibid, p. 75.

with him to Kuvale but he was late and missed the trip. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho refers to him several times in the text, which gives it a very personal tone.

Em Agosto de 1997 fiz mais uma ronda pela Província do Namibe, sudoeste de Angola, onde desde 1992 mantenho um contacto frequente com alguns pastores kuvale. Estava previsto acompanhar-me, para se inteirar da terra e das gentes, e olhar para Angola a partir dali, um amigo meu, fixado em Londres e repórter da BBC. Acabei por fazer a viagem sem ele. Tardava e eu não podia adiar a partida. Admiti no entanto que talvez pudesse chegar ainda nos próximos dias, a tempo de alcançar-me. Fui-lhe por isso deixando cassetes com a gravação do que contava dizer-lhe pelo caminho. Era a maneira de tentar ajudá-lo, mesmo assim, a alargar o contacto com o que buscava. Não chegou a aparecer e mais tarde transcrevi essas cassetes. Divulgo agora os salvados, são a viagem do texto.⁵¹³

Thus, the author is an active participant in the story he writes and he is both a real and a fictional subject. Without this involvement in the narrative, it loses its literary and ethnographic significance. Thus, the author constructs himself as a creator of his own narrative in which he is personally involved, but dressed up with some kind of literary and ethnographic authority. He seems not to be worried about it since he acknowledges the methodological framework used by his predecessors in the field of anthropology and literature. He also seems to be aware that his direct involvement in the narrative is interfering with the text itself. But he still gets more involved.

In one short passage about his motivation to write the book, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho says that: “investido há mais de cinco anos num projecto que ninguém me encomendou e a tentar por todos os meios torná-lo socialmente rentável sem perder no entanto de vista que se trata de facto de um projecto pessoal.”⁵¹⁴ For Carvalho, this project was fruit of his personal motivation. No one had ever asked him to start it. He has been involved in it for years. That is why he strove to make it socially profitable alone.

I can say that the discursive authority of *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* can be found in the conscience of the author which is inspired by his memory, his identification of factors, his concepts, his preparations, his thinking, his assessments of probabilities and his planning.

⁵¹³ Ibid, p. 11.

⁵¹⁴ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, p. 105.

One of the strongest traces of contemporary literature is the self-conscience about the text the author writes. Apart from the realisms characterized by this school, modernity is defined by being aware of the force of representations.

Most parts of his work are full of references about the history and representations of the Kuvale culture and people. For example, these discussions are observed when the author raises issues concerning the existence of a system of caste in the Kuvale society⁵¹⁵ or when he questions the books of Carlos Estermann and Vedder:

Pessoalmente tenho boas razões para crer, a partir do meu próprio inquérito, que os dados assim utilizados talvez sejam em si mesmos mais do que merecedores de contestação, e as interpretações muitos sujeitas a caução, embora a própria pesquisa aplicada à Namíbia continue a utilizá-los como base inquestionável. O Pe. Carlos não pode de forma alguma ser criticado nos mesmos termos em que Vedder é hoje contestado sobretudo pela historiografia namibiana, que lhe reconhece o talento mas o implica directa e deliberadamente em programas e ideologias de dominação colonial. Mas eu assumo que ele de facto não terá escrito nenhuma “bíblia” sobre as populações do Sudoeste de Angola. O que escreveu é precioso mas é escasso, impressionista e em muitos casos omisso, e traz também marca do tempo e sobretudo do seu método de etnógrafo antes de mais missionário, preparado sobretudo para enfrentar e decifrar uma África cuja redenção há-de passar pelo exercício de um ou de muitos apostolados, noção que afinal ainda hoje prevalece mas paramentada de outras roupagens, como a da ajuda humanitária, das ofensivas desenvolvimentistas ou das militâncias ecologistas.⁵¹⁶

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho seems to emphasise that the work of an anthropologist requires professional responsibility before publishing his or her reports. He criticizes Carlos Estermann and Vedder for their ethnographic inaccuracies and omissions. Instead, he sees himself as an anthropologist who is responsible for what he says, which is somehow fruit of his responsible fieldwork research. So, for him, however, not everything a researcher reads about a particular issue is unquestionable or absolutely reliable as it was the case of Carlos Estermann’s *Etnografia do Sudoeste de Angola* (Volumes I and II).

⁵¹⁵ Ibid, p. 90.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid, p. 72.

Statements such as these, and also previous 'theoretical hypotheses, can undeniably situate the author within the field of anthropology since he appears to address the academic readers and defend its methodology and ethics. But the authority of his anthropological discourse is also conditioned and limited by his direct involvement in the text, to which I have already made reference. Of course, this involvement does not make him lose authority either. But, it impedes him in certain way to be in full control of his entire discourse.

His presence in the text is compared to someone who is acting in a drama and his discourse can be considered as 'post-ethnographic', something Diana Irene Klinger has considered as simultaneously autobiographical and ethnographical. The reading of this book is on these intersection, given that it is not a self-fictional narrative with short ethnographic elements, but a strong and unquestionable ethnographic narrative encroached with a strong self-fictional and meta-discursive weight, where the discourse about the other is only valid if it reveals itself as a construction of someone who is in the field.

6. 2. 2. 3. Thematic and Structural Representations

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho starts by situating the Kuvale people. For that, he uses two instruments: the available written material and the oral traditions. Then, he goes on to write about the social and physical environments in which they move as well as the productive system that sustains such environments. Living among these people for years helped him observe closely how the youth, the adults, the children, the women and their animals lived, moved and acted.

He tried to understand the universe of the *buluvulus*, the youth, and very important subjects of his research. These *buluvulus* are well-trained young adult groups who are responsible for looking after the wealth of the old clansmen. I made references about them in chapter five. They can make wars and are expected to protect children, women and the cattle. These young adults are also expected to replace the old clansmen and inherit from them their properties, mainly their cows once these men die. As put by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho,

Este gado é manejado a partir de grandes concentrações baseadas em pontos de água importantes e aptos a dessedentar milhares de cabeças durante certos períodos do ano, e é essa parte do rebanho, com os seus pastores, os *buluvulus*, que cumpre as grandes transumâncias...O treino dos jovens *buluvulus* na arte da guerra é precedido, enquanto crianças, pela sua aprendizagem da arte do pastoreio. Tomando conta de cabras e carneiros, que é a sua infantil ocupação, tornaram-se já exímios nas técnicas

de arremesso de paus e pedras e estabeleceram já também pequenos campos de treino na vizinhança das suas residências. Num campo de treinos desses encontra-se armações de paus que sustentam fasquias, *ontambo*. Em operações de guerra os combatentes podem ser cercados dentro dos *sambos* assaltados, a defesa organiza-se obstruindo as saídas normais e será preciso saber saltar as cercas de espinheira. É preciso também aprender a andar no escuro e a conduzir retiradas com o gado.⁵¹⁷

Nevertheless, the adults are still the sole owners and keepers of the all productive system as long as they live, as described in chapter five. Life in the Kuvale land is considered to be endless or eternal. The dead or the ancestors continue to be the guardians of the community.

As far as the natural resources and the energetic profits are concerned, Carvalho says that there is a crucial balance between grassland-water-cattle-labour-force-consumption. This balance is reflected in the economy and ecology of the clan. The pastoralist societies are so institutionally organized that it is almost unthinkable to break this socioeconomic framework with the introduction of an exogenous economic system. The benefits of that balance are socially shared.⁵¹⁸

Thus, *Vou lá visitor Pastores* can be seen as an ethnographic approach to the issues related to nomadism and pastoral farming among shepherds. In this sense, it is culturally significant.

For example, cows are metaphors symbolising power, wealth and social balance, which becomes a mythology in itself.⁵¹⁹ Cows are thought to be vital animals to find the social harmony that is needed in the land. Apart from this, they also sustain and build social and economic relations. Quoting Ruy Duarte de Carvalho again,

A sua riqueza faz-se de bois, eles extraem bois do “deserto” porque souberam preservar um sistema de exploração animal que garante essa possibilidade, e esse modelo comporta as exactas modalidades de relação social que o garantem como um sistema operativo e economicamente interessante.⁵²⁰

The logic of socioeconomic relations found among the shepherds is different from the one found among sedentary ethnic groups. Obviously, these shepherds never remain in the same place

⁵¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 262 – 276.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 126 – 127.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid, p. 295.

⁵²⁰ Ibid, p. 308.

permanently. They are always in the move, a circular journey which will increase the number of cows they bring along. And this logic of living is continually questioned and disapproved of by their neighbours, who see it as an anarchy which they expect the State to combat and regulate. For them, the shepherds must be discouraged from wandering up and down, but they must be stopped and put definitely in a specific territory and follow rules.

According to Carvalho, the Kuvale farming systems can be narrowed down to two categories: the system of the economy of the milk/meat and the economy of the balance between consumption, reciprocity and redistribution. As Ruy Duarte de Carvalho explains,

O modelo económico que baliza a actuação e garante a prosperidade actual do Kuvale, ao mesmo tempo que dá oportunidade à emergência de homens ricos, uma versão local de “big-men”, também exige, por exemplo, que a sua afirmação e preservação como tal passe pela redistribuição directa dos resultados acumulados. Trata-se de um modelo endógeno africano, fundamentado portanto na reciprocidade, e reciprocidade implica redistribuição.⁵²¹

However, these systems are endangered by the globalised economic system of free market and expansion of goods. The shepherds’ system has collided with the exogenous systems of political economies of free market. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho warns that the practices of distribution and redistribution is not only for cultural survival of the Kuvale, but also part of the conceptual understanding of their economic structure. As he observes,

Mas aqui, entre os Kuvale, uma vez mais uma prática como a redistribuição não se impõe como uma sobrevivência cultural, como a incidência de um arcaísmo exercido mais ou menos à sucapa, mais ou menos discretamente para não susceptibilizar em demasia a moral e a generosidade dos gestores da finança internacional. Ela aqui é directa, franca e imediata, isto é, faz parte da substância conceptual e operatória de um modelo económico que vigora e dá provas.⁵²²

Accordingly, the phenomenon of ‘transumância’ has been practiced in order to look for and preserve the small sources of water, grassland and salt, which is still available in their land. As a result,

⁵²¹ Ibid, p. 308.

⁵²² Ibid, p. 309.

this can protect their economic system of the milk/meat and the system of balance between consumption, reciprocity and redistribution.

Nevertheless, the economic and ecological balance of these systems have faced disarticulation due to the expansion of the economy of market, as said earlier. Unfortunately, the local government has done very little to protect these endogenous systems from becoming extinct and avoiding social collapse. Notwithstanding that, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho was optimistic about the survival of it since, for him, reciprocity and redistribution are cultural concepts so deeply rooted in the African society that it will be very difficult to disappear completely. As he put it,

Para quem não ande completamente distraído, há-de impor-se a evidência de que a reciprocidade e a redistribuição constituem termos de tal forma sedimentados como traços culturais do comportamento africano que, mesmo nas práticas correntes de algumas economias que se declaram modernas, a sua prevalência pode revelar uma surpreendente tenacidade. Ainda quando inserido em economias que adoptam explicitamente o modelo mercantil e empenhado em projectar-se como produto de primeira qualidade da sua lógica e dos seus valores, não há homem próspero africano, por mais engravatado e empulseirado de ouro que se apresente, que não se sinta, por opção de consciência pessoal ou coagido por pressões de ordem familiar ou outras, levado a partilhar com as retaguardas donde se destaca como sujeito, sejam elas rurais ou urbanas, o benefício que advém do seu sucesso. Ele vai ver-se estimulado ou obrigado a redistribuir vantagens. Quando não riqueza quantificável, pelo menos lugares e posições dentro do aparelho e dos circuitos em que soube vingar.⁵²³

All things considered, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho acknowledges the complexity of the problems involved in the preservation of nomadic people, but he still appeals to common sense and defends the preservation of cultures and persuades the general public to let the shepherds continue their pastoral farming systems. Here is Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's position about all this:

Ocorrer-te-á sem dúvida dúvida interrogares-te acerca de qual é a maneira como afinal me situo em relação a tudo isto, e como situo uma sociedade como esta face ao todo que Angola é e ao mundo, já que certamente não te passa pela cabeça que pela minha possa passar a ideia de admitir a criação de reservas que declarem intocáveis os pastores e os bois que ficarem lá dentro, dando-lhes assim a oportunidade de

⁵²³ Ibid, p. 309.

preservarem o seu património *cultural* e *ancestral* a troco de passarem a constituir um inócuo e gratificante espectáculo para o *mundo civilizado*, quer se deem ou não conta de que a sua singularidade cultural e social se vê assim entretanto incorporada numa *indústria* moderna, a do turismo, opção que, por mais aberrante que possa parecer-te, anda a agitar certos espíritos com poder de investimento ou decisão nesta África Austral...⁵²⁴

6. 3. Ethnographic and Cultural Convergences and Divergences

On the one hand, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho travels to the southwest of Angola to more closely study the Kuvale people, the main subjects of his research. He used the method of direct and participant observations as a way to understand these communities. In this way, he acknowledged Malinowski and Franz Boas theory of “participant observation”, a methodology used by practitioners of Anthropology and ethnology to conduct fieldwork research. So, Carvalho’s findings have been both inspiring and challenging to cultural studies. Manuela Ribeiro Sanchez writes that

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho bem mostra nos seus textos, é decisivo no que toca ao que se escreve, antes e depois. Assinale-se com efeito os títulos enigmáticos, auto-reflexivos, poéticos, para usar de um termo pouco preciso, que dá aos seus textos: *Vou lá visitar pastores, Actas da Maianga, Desmedida* para referir apenas alguns deles e os que mais directamente me inspiraram. São todos textos de viagem. Viagem de antropólogo a caminho do terreno, narrando a um interlocutor privilegiado as suas experiências, contando os pastores kuvale a um amigo em Londres, ou o Brasil ao amigo pastor. Diálogos, monólogos, a acompanhar trânsitos entre Lisboa, Luanda, Nova Iorque, entre Angola e o Brasil. Viagens não só entre lugares, mas também entre textos que com ele viajam, o inspiram: desde estudos sociológicos ou antropológicos, a romances, narrativas de viagem, ensaios filosóficos, todos eles adquirem essa mobilidade nómada que o analista dos pastores kuvale parece partilhar com os seus ‘objectos de estudo’. Viagens entre o terreno, as sociedades ‘tradicionais’ e as ‘modernas’, entre ‘centros’ e ‘periferias’, rio acima, no Brasil, evocando Guimarães Rosa e Euclides da Cunha, bem como Cendrars, deixando-se fascinar pelo aventureirismo de um Sir Richard Burton (Desmedida).⁵²⁵

⁵²⁴ Ibid, p. 344.

⁵²⁵ <http://www.buala.org/pt/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/outros-lugares-outros-temposviagens-pela-pos-colonialidade-com-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2016.

Chinua Achebe, on the other hand, reconstructs fictionally the African cultures and the African prehistoric societies. *Things Fall Apart* is history in that sense. Susan Vanzanten says that “*Things Fall Apart*’s form, as well as its content, addresses issues of historicity. Its opening and closing paragraphs, for example, illustrate the contrast between a history constructed by an indigenous people, and one constructed by the colonizer (Innes 825).”⁵²⁶

Achebe exalts and criticizes Igbo’s cultural anthropology.⁵²⁷ This includes the fictional story about their land and culture. So, for him, the story of the Igbo is the story of all other African people: the story of their ancestors, gods, land, religion, cultures, myths, proverbs, languages and ultimately, of their story of colonization. For Achebe, African history is a way of preserving what brings Africans together, i. e., culture. Achebe writes back against the Western cultural hegemony and imperialist languages and cultures distorted the story he is trying to retell. This is also part of his strategy to help bring back the past memories of the African worldviews and fight against amnesia.

Surely, both writers highlight the importance of studying and understanding culture, history and art. Retelling the stories of the people they describe is their way of participating in cultural research and preservation.

Vou lá visitar Pastores is an ethnographic description of issues related to nomadism of the Kuvaleland shepherds. Its universal significance is reached because of the ethnographic rapport it brings. It records in a text the cultural wisdom which lies beneath the oral tradition of Kuvale people. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho is fortunate since he managed to register part of anthropological and linguistic factors about these people’s traditions. In synthesis, his ethnographic narrative exposes hidden cultural realities.

Niggling issues such as orality, literature, tradition and modernity are continually present in the text he writes. He raises and answers questions of ethnicity and identity. Carvalho wants to raise awareness to the issues of ethnic conflicts and exclusion. He warns that disregarding small groups such as the shepherds on the basis of ethnicity, culture and language can be socially dangerous. His narrative transcends all the political walls and concerns about these issues, because he gave concrete

⁵²⁶ Susan Vanzanten, “The Headstrong Historian: Writing with *Things Fall Apart* in *Research in African Literatures* (Vol. 46, No. 2 (Summer 2015), p. 87.

⁵²⁷ See Carey Snyder, “The Possibilities and Pitfalls of Ethnographic Readings: Narrative Complexities in *Things Fall Apart*,” in *College Literature*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 154 – 174.

answers to them. For him, to guarantee protection for groups like these ones, everyone has to be involved in and learn to appreciate the value of culture and language of the other.

In *Things Fall Apart* culture is seen not as static, but also dynamic and continually changing. But, Achebe wants to show that flexibility is necessary for successful adaptation. Thus, in his account, tradition and modernity are in relentless dialectical confrontation in which change is inevitable, although it can either be accepted or denied, as evidenced by how the people of Umuofia refused to join Okonkwo as he kills the messenger who accepted the values brought by the colonialists.⁵²⁸ That is why I say that this narrative depicts clashes of civilization at many levels: linguistic, ethnic, racial, traditional, religious, political and economic.

By integrating traditional Igbo words, folktales, and songs into English sentences, the author is successful in proving that African languages aren't incomprehensible as Conrad defended, although they are often too complex for direct translation into English. Like all other modern European languages, African languages carry the myths, the history and the religious concepts about the people and cultures they represent. Myths, totems, superstitions, rituals, festivals and icons are all parts of being culturally conditioned.

In *Things Fall Apart*, for example, the mask, the earth, the legends and the rituals represent the cultural references of the Igbo culture. This demonstrates that the Igbo had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty; that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity. In this sense, this narrative is not but a response to the ideologies and discursive strategies of the colonial texts such as Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* which denied that Africans had a philosophy of great depth and a value even before the colonial presence.⁵²⁹ It is a response to the *Heart of Darkness* which projects the image of Africa as the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization.

Contrasting it, Achebe and Carvalho presented altogether the African villages of self-contained people, who like most people, are socially organized and sometimes blame or praise the gods for their sorrows and pleasures. In these villages discipline was stern and law-based. For this reason, the descriptions by some ethnographers and missionaries of these villages trying to denigrate

⁵²⁸ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart...*, p. 149.

⁵²⁹ Caryl Phillips and Chinua Achebe's debate "Was Joseph Conrad Really a Racist?" In *Philosophia Africana*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (March 2007), pp. 59 – 66.

them do not make any sense. What these villages practiced was not bestial and primitive, but it was a civilization.

But with the coming of the British, Portuguese, French and others, life in these villages was disrupted and altered. In the case of Igboland, for example, it was incorporated into a totally different polity, which was called Nigeria with a lot of other different people with whom they had no contact, but now forced to live together,⁵³⁰ as Achebe emphasised. In the case of Kuvale people, the group was almost extinct due to the massacres and deportations experienced in the years 1940s, perpetrated by the Portuguese colonialists. In fact, the violent integration of various nationalities in just one single State, probably explains why many ethnic conflicts in Africa are far from over. The disruptions caused to African societies have altered its natural and social order.

The title of Achebe's book *Things Fall Apart* is appropriate. It illustrates it very well: falling apart of things. It appears that his literary effort was some kind of mission to try to put these things together again. I think that is what Carvalho tried to do as well by recording the cultural wisdom which lies in the oral tradition of the Kuvale people.

In fact, going back to the story that Achebe tells in *Things Fall Apart*, when the white man comes in the form of a missionary into this Igbo village, things fell apart indeed:

Does the white man understand our custom about land? - How can he when does not even speak our tongue? But he says that our customs are bad; and our brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad. How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.⁵³¹

Achebe explains here what the "falling of things apart" means. It means that things such as values, religion, customs, people and communal life are all broken. That is an illustration of what happens when cultures collide. The strongest usually imposes its values on the other and the weakest usually see them as true and superior. This has certainly been the experience of all African

⁵³⁰ See *The Atlantic Online*, available through the EDSITEment-reviewed resource Internet Public Library (Last access, 26/06/2012)

⁵³¹ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 129.

countries.⁵³² When Africans look for historical or cultural references, they usually do it by looking to the West and not to their own traditions, given that these traditions were once depicted as inferior.

The reality of African cultures can be compared with the image of a foot of a man stepping right in the middle of a line of ants which were travelling peacefully and in harmony to the hills. This foot caused death, confusion and disorientation. Some ants died, the others went back, and some other went forward, and most of them got lost as a result. The line will never be the same again and, probably, the reunification will remain a utopia. The ants are the African; the line is the cultural, economic and political progress; the hills are the altered horizons and the foot is the religion and the cultural imperialism of the white man.

The African religious cosmos in which ancestral worship is key was replaced by the theology of Western and Eastern religions that claimed having a universal mandate to convert others since they still believe to be the only ones who can experience and announce God indeed. All others were taken as pagan and with no theological value whatsoever. Can we imagine someone suddenly coming to our shores with a new faith and forcing us to change our own? By accepting to change what held them together in life such as values, tradition, the destiny of these African 'ants' has been altered forever.

However, falling apart also refers to an implosion happening within African cultures, because the old traditions do not seem to meet the needs anymore. The younger generations are questioning the older ones. So things are also falling apart from within as well as from the outside. Even though, the old culture did not meet everybody's needs, the fact is that they really had a culture that worked for most of them, and it worked in a very loving, giving and communal way.

And when stronger cultures impose their values and visions on the others, all you can get is disintegration of their former cultural practices. And, so, that sense of nurturing, that sense of connectivity is lost because it just drives them asunder. Situations of cultural disintegration like these can be watched live on TV every day. In countries such as Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Nigeria and Libya and in many other minority ethnic groups, cultural and social landscapes are being altered and wiped away because of political wars waged by stronger countries.

⁵³² See Neil ten Kortenaar, "Chinua Achebe and the Question of Modern African Tragedy," in *Philosophia Africana*, Vol. 9, No. 2, August 2006, pp. 82 – 100. See also Kwaku Larbi Korang, "Making a Post-Eurocentric Humanity: Tragedy, Realism, and Things Fall Apart," in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 42, No. 2, (Summer 2011), pp. 1 – 29.

However, what fascinates me the most is the manner in which Achebe and Carvalho presented these two cultures to us. Take Igbo, for example. It is primarily without explanation, but even in the opening scenes, the sharing of the little bit of food that is in the household and the ritual (who cracks the nut, who presents it, the kinds of words that are said before it is consumed), depict great cultural and theological communions.

Achebe establishes the community, and that is so important for him, unlike the typical kind of novel that starts out with the conflict. He establishes this community and one gets so immersed in it, and one learns to appreciate the richness of it. What also strikes anyone who reads it, is the role of women in the Igbo culture. The woman aspect comes out when we have the juxtaposition of Part II against Part I, because Part II is where Okonkwo has to go to live with his mother's kinsmen, and there is Uchendu, a wise man, his uncle, who talks about the whole difference between mothers and fathers, women and men. He asks:

Why is Okonkwo with us today? This is not his clan. We are only his mother's kinsmen. He does not belong here. He is in exile, condemned for seven years to live in a strange land. And so he is bowed with grief. But there is just one question I would like to ask him. Can you tell me, Okonkwo, why it is that one of the commonest names we give our children is Nneka, or 'Mother is Supreme'? We all know that a man is the head and his family and his wives do his bidding. A child belongs to its father and his family and not to its mother and her family. A man belongs to this fatherland and not to his motherland. And yet we say Nneka – 'Mother is Supreme'. Why is that? (...) I do not know the answer, Okonkwo replied. You do not know the answer? So you see that you are a child. You have many wives and many children – more children than I have. You are a great man in your clan. But you are still a child, my child. Listen to me and I shall tell you. But there is one more question I shall ask. Why is it that when a woman dies she is taken home to be buried with her own kinsmen? She is not buried with her husband's kinsmen. Why is that? (...) Okonkwo shook his head.... Then listen to me.... It is true that a child belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you. She is buried there. And that is why

we say that mother is supreme. Is it right that you, Okonkwo, should bring your mother a heavy face and refuse to be comforted? Be careful or you may displease the dead.⁵³³

I think that this passage is not only important because of the contrasts of the worldviews between Okonkwo and his uncle, but also because his uncle wants to emphasize here the central role and the social position of African women in their cultures. Women are believed to be supreme mothers who always show sympathy and comfort even to the unloved and unprotected children. Throughout Achebe's book I see male and female principles interposing each other. And I might probably question today whether these are really male and female principles or just issues of power.

Despite that, unlike a lot of books I read, this is a book that was written with the relationship of men and women very strongly in mind. One does not take any of this as being gratuitous in any way at all. Achebe is dealing with the issue of women in culture all the way through the book.

Perhaps the conflict with old traditions seems to make the story he tells rather more challenging: the innocent boy that is killed because of religious oracles; a son walking, through the woods, hearing the cries of the abandoned twins and wanting to save them, but feeling the pressure of tradition of not to, because they are considered to be bad luck to the community.

Well, one might ask what holds a culture together, except for meaningless traditions like these ones. Traditions are very important to hold people and rituals together, and the tradition in the Igbo culture, was that twins were bad luck, a bad omen, not just for their family, but for the entire clan, for entire people. So, to protect the people and the clan, you must remove this menace from the community. Of course, it is very difficult for strangers to understand that because of their preconceptions and biases. But culture is all that, mysteries and perceptions. And what Achebe does so beautifully is to question and try to deconstruct all these old traditions for better understanding.

Carvalho, however, seems to go beyond the why-questions and how-questions. Understanding these apparently meaningless traditions which were called primitive is achieved through field research. He shares with us the nomadic life and culture of the Kuvale people. In contrast, many first missionaries, anthropologists and state commissioners saw those African cultures as primitive, therefore, in need of "civilisation". They saw this reality as simply ignorance and

⁵³³ Ibid, pp. 98 – 99.

darkness, therefore, “modernity” would cure all these African “problems”, as if the simple change of calendar is enough to change someone’s mindset.

It is interesting to think about or imagine the Christians saying to these people: - *well, your gods, your ancestors, and your traditions do not work. Now, let us explain our religion to you. See, there is this person who lived 2000 years ago, and his mother and father really did not have sexual intercourse. Yet, he was born. His mother was a virgin girl, but she got pregnant under the power of the Holy Spirit. The Son was born but at the age of 33 was put to death on a cross to save us, and then came alive again, ascended to heaven and lives there with His Father pleading for us. He will come again to raise us from the dead. Do you see? Do you understand that? We are here because of Him and you must be one of us if you want to be saved and go to heaven.*

Definitely, I think that that was a very hard conversation to have with those new black converts who already had a religion.

The conversation between Mr Brown (a missionary) and Akunna (a traditional religious leader) about the difference between God and Chukwu in chapter twenty-one is an example of this proselytizing attitude shown by missionaries in general and of the resistance shown by the locals.⁵³⁴ It is fascinating to notice that in spite of the language difficulties in establishing those conversations, the missionaries and the local people managed to surmount them.

In Achebe’s novel the white people came in two groups. They come in the church, and then the church is backed up by the power of the state. Once Okonkwo and his people destroy one of the churches, the state has to come to defend it. In my opinion, this is important, since it shows that those conversations held by the missionaries and the local people were not always pacific. Sometimes, they ended up being extremely violent. Nevertheless, there seemed to be no other option left to native people, because, for these missionaries, *extra ecclesia nulla salus*: there was no salvation outside the Church.

The other particularly important aspect to look at is the theology of conversion. The group that came attracted to the new religion first were the individuals seen as the outcast in their own communities, physically or – as in the case of Okonkwo’s son Nwoye – individuals who have been a little more sensitive and hopeless. This is exactly the same experience we read through the New

⁵³⁴ Ibid, p. 131.

Testament. The first disciples converted to Jesus's Good News (the Gospel) were also considered as outcasts: cripples, prostitutes, fishermen and so forth (Lc 4, 31 – 42, Mt 4, 18 – 25; Mc 1, 14 – 45; Jo 1, 35 – 51, Jo 8, 1 - 10). Achebe seems to be familiar with these biblical stories. What pulls Nwoye into the new religion is the Christian poetry and music, which are very interesting, as well as the repulsion he felt in relation to the atrocities perpetrated by his country fellows, including his own father.

In line with this view, I can say that Carvalho's research is an ethnographic post-scriptum about what happened to those traditional communities after colliding with and being disrupted by the colonial powers. In this sense, Carvalho seems to be investigating what has left of such groups. His urgency is to record the culture and history of this particular group of shepherds. Surprisingly, he finds out that the shepherds continue to be resiliently nomadic. I think that Carvalho is complementing Achebe's narrative one way or another.

One of Carvalho's strategies is to appeal to the ecological consciousness these people can raise, especially in the new comers, an issue which I believe is relevant today.⁵³⁵ Our ecosystem is threatened by global warming. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho believes that these peoples can teach us how to preserve Mother Nature. He explains that this ecological mindset helped the Kuvale people resist to all the crises which Angola went through during the independence and cold wars, because their economy of subsistence provided the devices needed to adapt themselves. In fact, although meat was considered the main product for nourishment, other circuits of exchange of cereals were also rehabilitated, which had been destroyed by the colonial agricultural system and the war, in order to have wider options for food.⁵³⁶ This example of struggle to preserve nature and culture should be valued.

Furthermore, the conflict between the mercantile and the endogenic systems is also reflected in *Vou lá visitar Pastores*. The fundamentals of the economic systems of the shepherds, the economy of the milk and the economy of equilibria are the core issues described by him. Carvalho thinks that this is extremely important to retain in order to understand the shepherds. The first balance is ecological. It is not an ecological understanding similar to what the environmentalists defend today. But it is a different type of ecology. For example, a rich shepherd might have cows spread from one

⁵³⁵ Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Vou lá visitar Pastores*, pp. 126 – 127.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, p. 167.

corner to the other of the Kuvaleland, but not have a clue of how many cows he has and how they look like. Yet, these cows cannot be touched and the person who protects them knows that he cannot misuse them as well, since he is simply a caretaker. A rich man is someone who knows that he has cows taken care of by other relatives of his lineage everywhere, and wherever he goes, he can ask his kinsmen to kill cows for him and share the meat with whoever he wishes. He can ask to slaughter cows wherever he might go.⁵³⁷

This results from the system Carvalho called “allocation” or redistribution. Everyone can benefit from this distribution or redistribution systems even though, one has an insignificant number of cows in his private shed or stable. In theory he has a few of them. But in practice, he is believed to have millions of them spread across the distant valleys and meadows. Seventy is normally the number of cows each family can manage to have under their control. It is also the ideal number the water and grassland around the *ongandas* or the compounds will allow them to create.

In fact, we observe here the existence of an equilibrium between the labour, the means and the natural resources. Once this equilibrium is broken, it is usually the ruin that is experienced. It implies that the polity established within the endogenic model of production is fundamentally conditioned by the mobility of their cows, the management of the grassland and the water sources found in the area. This is modelled within the concept of plural property and social responsibility. Nobody is the sole owner of what he or she possesses.⁵³⁸

So, for example, if a person has inherited cows from his own lineage and his nephew finds out that he is mishandling them, he could come and hold him accountable for it. This means that he is always asked to be accountable to his direct kinsmen for all his properties since it is his lineage which is the legitimate owner of what he has, mainly the cows. Usually, the only cows which are his legitimate properties are those ones which he bought. This money could have been acquired while working as a traditional healer or maybe while doing business in the neighbouring areas. If a cow was bought in these circumstances, it would be taken as his. In that case, he could do whatever he wants with it. But the others he cannot touch.

The reciprocity and the redistribution of what that has been accumulated is also discussed by Carvalho as economic models in themselves. Imagine you are a rich man! In the Kuvale culture, you

⁵³⁷ Ibid, pp. 167 – 171.

⁵³⁸ Ibid, p. 296.

are morally obliged to share what you have with your clansmen, especially during festive periods, when cows are killed for ritualistic purposes. Rich families could kill up to four cows to honour a particular ancestor or someone who has passed away. In fact, these events require the presence of the whole community. You do not need to be directly invited by the host, the feast itself invites you since you are part of the community.

Ethnographic convergences with the Igbo people can be drawn from here. They also practiced redistribution during the New Yam Festival, in which a rich man could spend a lot of his wealth to finance it and invite people from distant Igbo lands. This similarity induces to the fact that this tradition was commonly held in all traditional African societies.

The Kuvale social integration model is also discussed by Carvalho, especially in relation to education. Education and religion are all interwoven with the productive system of the Kuvaleland. When a shepherd distributed the meat to relatives and neighbours, it is usually in a session of religious cults to the ancestors or gods. Religion is always present. This alludes to the fact that in this particular society all learning process taking place is integrative and inclusive. For example, a small child has its role in the community. A child habitually looks after the calves found in the shed. He or she helps his/her mother to milk the cow. At the same time, the children are inclined to learn by heart all the characteristics the calves might have from height, weight, colour and age, name to their behaviour. This learning happens because these children will become the future *buluvulus* of the clan one day.⁵³⁹

In a society where there is no formal schooling, that is how a child learns how to be a competent shepherd and impress adults, who will eventually trust him with complicated matters of the clan. It is this education that is seen as important to give to children, which I think is functional, integrated and all-encompassing. In Igbo traditional societies, learning how to plant fresh yam tendrils was also seen as a way of helping a child become competent, skilful and integrated in the productive system of yam.

Another important aspect of Carvalho's findings about the Kuvale has to do with the moral control exerted on the individuals to conform to collective expectations. Curiously, if somebody broke a traditional norm, he would not be arrested. Of course, if someone happened to be arrested,

⁵³⁹ Ibid, pp. 200 – 280.

his or her absence would be deeply felt. Remember that Kuvale people are shepherds. Shepherds are always in the move. You would need mobile jails wherever you went. What happens is that those who break the traditional norms are usually penalized with a heavy fine. They will have to compensate the offended part with a fine that urges them to pay a certain number of cows for the damage caused. The compensation can come directly from him or from his family, especially when he/she is too young to do so. Actually, it is normally the young men who break the rule, but it is their uncles who often repair the damage caused. In this land, the uncle or the aunt is directly responsible for the faults of his nephews or nieces respectively.

This endogenous judiciary custom is confronted with the exogenous judiciary models found in the modern societies, bringing into conflict these two systems. How can you imprison someone that is always in the move and has his own judiciary system, which is contrary to yours? This is the difficulty faced by countries like Ireland and Portugal where the travellers and the gypsies move about freely. To have a shepherd who is a criminal moving about freely is not safe and to detain him is contrary to his judiciary system. The western punitive control system differs from the African traditional punitive system. Usually, western and traditional judiciary systems have an opposite punitive approach for the same crime committed. In the West the person involved could be judged, sentenced and probably sent to jail or home while in the African traditional judiciary system such a person could simply be judged and asked to pay a fine or heavily beaten up and sent home. Unfortunately, what usually happens with the shepherds that were imputed of crime is that they are penalized by both systems because of modern judiciary systems. On the one side, they are asked to pay a fine by their own traditional judges, while on the other side, they are sent to prison by the State local courts for the crime for which they have already paid a fine. In general, this ambiguity causes internal conflicts. Suicides are reported to be happening because of this unsolved conflicts between the endogenous and exogenous judiciary systems.

I find some convergences with the Igbo judiciary system, mainly in relation to fining people for crimes. Okonkwo, the hero of Achebe's story, was punished several times and received equal amount of fines for the faults he committed, but he was never imprisoned. So Okonkwo's first experience in a prison set up by the British commissioners in his village and the fine that imposed on them simultaneously were a shock and somehow confusing to him and his comrades.⁵⁴⁰ Such was

⁵⁴⁰ Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart...*, pp. 140 – 144.

not the practice in Umuofia. Did it mean anything to them? Probably not! Achebe does not tell us that. However, the second time the Commissioner tried to arrest them and bring them to court, Okonkwo kills his messenger and takes his own life.⁵⁴¹ This time, Okonkwo chose death instead of submission and humiliation.

Consequently, in relation to the shepherds, as one might expect, the social confrontations between mobile and fixed groups appears to be endless when it comes to jurisdictional matters. On the one hand, you cannot fix them in one place and force them to comply with administrative regulations imposed by the State, on the other hand, you might also feel the moral obligation of allowing them move about freely, but you never know what they will do next which might impair the State regulations.

Furthermore, the economy of equilibrium of the Kuvale opposes itself to the economy of growth of most western countries. The economic system of the western countries must grow from two to three percent per year. If it does not grow it is likely going to collapse. That is what most economists call financial recession. Whereas, for the Kuvale, this economic crisis only happens when the natural equilibrium or order is broken. In this sense, can the private property or the monetary system replace the system of reciprocity? In principle, money opposes itself to exchange of goods and services. Money is usually absent from the Kuvale economic system. Kuvale people hardly ever exchange goods with coins, but mostly with animals.⁵⁴²

In addition to this, the subdivision of the western educational system differs from the Kuvale integrated educational system, because in the west education is parted. You have different specializations. Even religion is parted in many other Christian denominations. For Kuvale people, as said before, religion and education are totally integrated in their social and productive systems. There is no such thing as educational specializations or religious denominations.

This shepherd society reflects structuralist and functionalist systems, where each member or symbol has role to play. Carvalho seems to reinterpret these approaches to describe and understand the Kuvale society. The roles played by the *buluvulus*, the ancestors and the cows are emphasised. In fact, the phenomena studied by Carvalho are a cultural experience.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 148 – 149.

⁵⁴² Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, *Vou lá visitar Pastores...*, p. 305.

Effectively, these two narratives are a perfect symbiosis of literature and anthropology wherein African linguistic terminologies are used to help describe the richness and complexities of these two cultures and history. For example, Carvalho's text is bilingual, using Portuguese and Mucubal, and it is done on purpose.

Both authors write fictionally and ethnographically, in which literature is used to present a more optimistic account about the Africans they describe. Achebe believes that

The last four or five hundred years of European contact with Africa produced a body of literature that presented Africa in a very bad light and Africans in very lurid terms. The reason for this had to do with the need to justify the slave trade and slavery. ... This continued until the Africans themselves, in the middle of the twentieth century, took into their own hands the telling of their story.⁵⁴³

Having said that, I conclude that Achebe wished to translate the Igbo's experience into a universal one of clash of civilizations. For this reason, he writes a story that can recapture the beauty and past of African cultures. In this sense, *Things Fall Apart* is not only a literary fiction but also an ethnographic description of Igbo culture.⁵⁴⁴

Mutually with *Vou lá visitar Pastores*, they represent the cultural roots of the Igbo and Mucubal people. Both authors refer to universal principles that hold these cultures tightly together. In both narratives, both people show a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty. They have poetry and, above all, have dignity. Although the Igbo have lost or transformed part of it, the shepherds, however, still preserve most of their cultural traditions in spite of long colonial occupation.

Therefore, I can say that Achebe and Carvalho represent elements of common humanity and emphasize certain basic political values which might form the foundations of modern African states and transform them into more inclusive and humane societies. This implies that they preach tolerance of other cultures, gender-balance of male and female principles, and the capacity to change

⁵⁴³ Chinua Achebe, "An African Voice". You can also see two interviews in which Achebe discusses the origins and purposes of his writing in "Chinua Achebe: The Art of Fiction CXXXIV," interviewed by Jerome Brooks in *The Paris Review*, Issue #133 (Winter 1994-5) and "An African Voice" Interview in *The Atlantic Online* (August 2, 2000).

⁵⁴⁴ See Carey Snyder, "The Possibilities and Pitfalls of Ethnographic Readings: Narrative Complexities in *Things Fall Apart*," in *College Literature*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 154 – 174.

for the better or meet new circumstances, a convenient means of redistributing wealth, and a viable system of morality, the support for industriousness, and an effective system of justice that makes things work in their society.

6. 4. Literary Convergences and Divergences

There is no doubt that these two texts are one of the platforms for readers of literature and anthropology immerse in African cultures and their literatures. This immersion also helps discover the differences, the strengths and the weaknesses of such cultures and literatures.

From the literary point of view, Achebe uses narrative techniques that contest colonialist discourse, and, at the same time, he enhances the beauty and the wealth of the African oral tradition. The use of simple, ordinary prose and a restrained mode of narration is remarkable. The omission of exotic descriptions, creation of subjectivity for his major characters is another literary tool applied by Achebe to make his narrative accessible to his audience. This is illustrated by means of an inclusion of a specific cultural and temporal context of the Igbo and Umuofia. In this way, he presented the complexities and the contradictions of a traditional Igbo community without idealizing it.

But Achebe cannot achieve this without interposing western linguistic forms and literary traditions with Igbo words and phrases, proverbs, fables, tales, and other elements of African oral and communal storytelling traditions, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. In such a way, he contributed to the preservation of African oral traditions, especially by subverting the colonialist language and culture.

Effectively, *Things Fall Apart* is written in a simple prose style where the coloured English language reflect the African verbal style with stresses and emphases that would be eccentric and unexpected in British and American speech, also mentioned earlier. Achebe reshapes the English language in order to imitate the linguistic pattern of his mother tongue, which is very repetitive and rhythmic.

Psycholinguists have demonstrated that the use of repetitions in narratives helps the readers and the listeners recall what they read or hear. Achebe seems to be aware of this technique since he wants his audience to remember what he is telling them with infatuation and enthusiasm.

As part of this symbiosis of modern and traditional literary tools, Achebe's narrative integrates traditional proverbs and some English metaphors since he wants to be more expressive and eloquent. The proverbs, the metaphors and the cultural myths are inextricably intertwined with the cultural

experiences of Igbo society as well as African. There is also plenty of humour, especially in the description of the first two missionaries on the scene, one liberal, gentle and understanding, and the other attacking his problems with fundamentalist rage and zeal.⁵⁴⁵

Apart from its simplicity, which is extraordinary, Achebe writes his narrative in a way that just places the reader there. The reader is not aware that he or she is there and that he or she is intentionally being guided. The story is presented to the reader as if he or she was listening to a 'griot' sit around a fire on a moony night. The writing does not intrude one's consciousness and it is not exhausting whatsoever. The only thing someone is conscious of is how these people lived. But step by step the reader realizes that he or she is part of the story; it is also his or her story (his/her story as a colonized or as a colonizer). It is a story of both winners and losers, i.e., the history of humankind.

In fact, Achebe is a very subtle writer. This subtlety is revealed even when he chose the title of his book from a line of Yeats's poem: *things fall apart*. The title is significant because it sets the mood for the novel, the mood of a society self-contained, unruffled and totally unaware of the dramatic changes that are only falconer's step away. The novelist recaptures this mood in all its simplicity and drama in the village wrestling contest.

It is the cohesion, order and strength seen in the texture of Igbo society which Achebe examines in the first part of the novel. He proceeds to examine this structure not in an academic anthropological sense, as Carvalho does in *Vou lá visitar Pastores*, but in the context of phenomenology of life, including the hopes, the fears, the superstitions, the customs and the beliefs of the Igbo he knew well.

The second part of the novel deals with the arrival of the first missionaries and the gradual encroachment of an alien church, government and commerce upon the established and traditional patterns of life. Finally in the third part, "the centre cannot hold"; the tribe that had but one heartbeat is now divided; the things that held the people together no longer do, the 'widening gyre' turns and turns until it is destroyed. It is literarily very eccentric.

The fact that the novel was written in English is relevant too, given that it is an interesting irony of Achebe which is partly seeking an audience for publication. He seems to have been aware that if he had used Igbo as Ngugi wa Thiongo had done with *Gikuyo*, his audience would have

⁵⁴⁵ Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, p. 106.

probably shrunk as well. He uses the language of the oppressors to communicate directly with them instead as he also expected reactions from them.

The issue of language is very important for many African writers. In which language you wrote was a significant question for the first writers. It could pave the way for one's popularity or not. Even today, this question continues to be as relevant as before for many young African writers.

One person who has spent a lot of time examining this issue is the famous writer Ngugi wa Thiongo'o from Kenya, who decided that he would write in Gikuyo as opposed to English, which might reach more people. Today, experience has shown that probably Ngugi made the wrong decision by writing his most important literary works in Gikuyo. Most of these works have not been read by most African literary critics yet, because of language barrier. Until now, 'which language to write in' is the dilemma of many rising writers, especially in terms of audience, where the publishing outlets are, and how truthful you can be to the experience that you are trying to describe.

Achebe's narrative is a powerful cultural novel because of combining anthropological and literary tools. It has bridged the tension between oral culture and written culture. A lot of marginalized writers satisfy this tension between oral culture and written culture by finding ways of bringing the oral into the written and making the written sound more oral. Has Chinua Achebe done it? I think so and, as a result, audience has not been a problem for him.

As someone once said, "if you really want to know something about the people you are confronting for the first time, read their fiction", Achebe also assumed it. He showed that he had mastered the foreign English fictions he was asked to read at school, and then transformed the language that translated those fictions into something Africanized.

Moreover, Achebe uses literary instruments to examine the worthiness and dignity of the Igbo culture before and immediately after its colliding course with an alien culture. It is this deep concern for and commitment to the culture of a people that his literary venture has come about. This has proved to be a challenge and an inspiration to literary artists of Achebe's own time and place, and also to those outside them.

At this point, I think that Achebe's narrative does converge literarily with Carvalho's because of their deep concern with culture and people. Both narratives are a result of the literary venture and adventure of their authors. One described the Igbo people and the other the Kuvale people.

It should also be said that it is not that Achebe and Carvalho believed that those kinds of cultures could have been maintained after their colliding course with alien cultures. Achebe, for example, in his later writing, he went into the great complexities of post-colonialism and how the society has to restore itself – but in a different way. I mean, he is not saying that the old way was the right way, something that Ruy Duarte Carvalho equally did according to Manuela Ribeiro Sanchez:

Qual a relevância da obra de Ruy Duarte de Carvalho para se pensar a pós-colonialidade? É esta a questão que me parece quase óbvia, quando releio os seus textos, sobre eles reflico, neles reencontro propostas que, escritas a partir de outros lugares ou de lugares idênticos – África, Europa, Brasil –, me suscitam interrogações semelhantes, formas de ler o passado e o presente em que me revejo mais facilmente do que em outros autores. Como poucos escritores de língua portuguesa Ruy Duarte Carvalho faz da condição pós-colonial um tema recorrente na sua obra.⁵⁴⁶

Carvalho defends that cultures must be understood and preserved at all cost. Every social lifestyle and individual acting has its own cultural logic. No one has the legitimacy to change the way of living of people he/she encounters, even though social and natural changes are inevitable somehow. In this sense, Carvalho's literary relevance comes for the fact of having appropriated "the concept of deterritorialization". His text "combined the metaphors of space through the writing on transhumant experience". As Ana Martinho summarized it,

His work *Vou lá Visitar pastores* is based on the very idea of liveable, walkable, visitable spaces that appropriate the concept of deterritorialization. This combines metaphors of space through the writing on transhumant experiences. As he is accepted by the community of shepherds he wants to write about, he builds a network of references that connects the observed community to the national history and that notes micro-cultural contents as he deconstructs the macro-narrative of the nation through the contending voices (in space and time) of historians, shepherds, thieves, adventurers, chroniclers, youngsters, market vendors, writers. At the same time, his own role as an observer is under scrutiny, and his self-reflexive practice forces him to a permanent negotiation of his own text; clearly a pan-nomadic experience.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁶ <http://www.buala.org/pt/ruy-duarte-de-carvalho/outros-lugares-outros-temposviagens-pela-pos-colonialidade-com-ruy-duarte-de-carvalho> accessed in 2015.

⁵⁴⁷ Ana Maria Martinho Gale, *The Protean Web*, p. 105.

The way I understand that quotation above is that, for Carvalho, writing about the community of shepherds is a way of building a network of references that connects it to the national history of Angola. Carvalho deconstructs myths, and beats the contending voices that oppose the survival of the community of shepherds. What is interesting to notice it is his permanent negotiation with the text he writes since it is confronted with his participant observation method. Ana Martinho calls it a “pan-nomadic experience” since Carvalho’s role as an observer is constantly questioned, assessed and reassessed in some kind of self-reflexive attitude.

6. 5. Readership and theoretical implications of both works in African literature and the national canons

I see three levels of readership of *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*: literary, anthropological and ethnographic. This presupposes to say that these texts are forms of reading colonial and post-colonial representations. As Ana Maria Martinho Gale states it, these texts “play a role that is not limited to the regular editorial space. They are central and instrumental in the discussion of politics, thought, culture, and education.”⁵⁴⁸

She defends that “ethnographic fiction, such as Achebe’s (my emphasis), is a genre that allows a transversal reading of these historical and cultural evidences.”⁵⁴⁹ In some cases, these texts work as a means to take literature to the ‘position of a mediator in social conflict’ and cultural studies. In fact, this has inspired a great number of critical works including my thesis which used literature, ethnography and anthropology as tools to understand local cultures and colonial ideology. Critics such as Valle de Almeida, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, Comaroff, Clifford, and Burawoy were notable in the use of this methodology.

According to Jude C. Okpala, for example, three forms of hermeneutics can be recognized in the critical history of *Things Fall Apart*:

The first group reads the novel from a linguistic paradigm and argues for the illegitimacy of any anthropological interpretation of the text. For this group, what is important is the symbolic nature of such a novel, which ‘continually restructures a variety of subtexts: cultural, political, historical and at times even biographical. The second group, particularly A.G. Stock, sees a rapport between Achebe’s Igboland and

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 151.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 151.

Yeat's England. The third group, comprised of Obiechina, Chinweizu et al., Robert Wren, and Nnolim, explores the historical and cultural contexts of the novel.⁵⁵⁰

For me, these three forms of hermeneutics are concurrent in reading and interpreting Achebe's novel. His novel is all together linguistic, symbolic, metaphoric, cultural and historically verifiable. This reading is central to ethnography and literary theory and renders a status of ethnographic fiction to *Things Fall Apart*.

Contextually, I see *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* as an ethnographic fiction too, which is "in the centre of the struggle to bring to the public eye a new way of looking at the unequivocal signs of empowered localized cultures." In this approach, I agree with what Ana Maria Martinho Gale says that,

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho belonged to a generation of writers who were responsible for creating a resilient reading of cultures in contact and of cultural spaces in a constant struggle for semiotic differentiation. These intellectuals write about the uncomfortable place of cultural mediation voicing both sides ("urban"/ "native") and often supporting the most marginal voices.⁵⁵¹

This means that both texts could also be read within the Deleuze and Guattari's theory of pan-nomadism, which is "an attempt to revise the human condition through the (re)constitutive practices of 'rhizomatic' epistemology." As a consequence of this,

Ruy Duarte de Carvalho proposes a form of counter poetics by choosing a narrative strategy that is not directional or directed to the purpose itself of poetic responses. It supposes rather an ethics of reading, which applies to the multiple sites of rhetorical variation. The pluralization of discourse and ideologies assures in his work the engagement in an absolute reading by the informants in the first place, and an empirical adjustment of knowledge, language and art in the communities. As nomadic war machines, these texts are violent, necessary and anti-hegemonic.⁵⁵²

It is this "empirical adjustment of knowledge, language and art in the communities" that appears to have made Chinua Achebe achieve canonization with *Things Fall Apart* and made him

⁵⁵⁰ Jude Chudi Okpala, "Igbo Metaphysics in Chinua Achebe's 'Things Fall Apart'" in *Callaloo*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring, 2002). Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3300586>. Accessed: 31/07/2013 05:29. p. 559.

⁵⁵¹ Ana Maria Martinho Gale, *opus cit.*, p. 152.

⁵⁵² Ibid, p. 108.

retain his top ranking in the African literary canon. Apart from it, his essays are also major contribution to growth of postcolonial theory and indigenous knowledge systems. These essays are “primarily by-products of his creative practice which expressed itself in the novel form. It is a tribute to Achebe’s art that the studies of his novels, as well as his own essays, are among the landmarks of the scholarship on African literature,” as someone said.

It does not mean that Achebe’s writing is completely free from critical controversy and disagreements. For example, his essay on Joseph Conrad, ‘An Image of Africa’ in *Hopes and Impediments*, has continued to generate critical arguments and various re-evaluations of Conrad and incidentally of Joyce Cary.⁵⁵³ Achebe’s remarks are concerned not so much with Conrad’s place in the English traditions as with the effect of his romantic view of language and reality on his representations of Africa, as already discussed.⁵⁵⁴

Clearly, it is not too difficult to see that the issue here is of the connection between the colonial theme and the question of language. Surely, language has become one of the key sites of the postcolonial contest. How were the ‘other’ represented linguistically and culturally by the colonial texts and systems and how have these texts and systems continued to influence postcolonial representations? These questions have remained insufficiently answered.

Furthermore, the language of African literature has been the other area in which Achebe’s views and choices have provoked controversy. His view on the language of African literatures still splits the ranks of even the novelists themselves, especially since language is tied up with the question of Identity and nationhood.

However, there is much broader consensus on his achievement which is the result of his theoretical impact on three main areas of the literary culture in Africa:

First, he virtually inverted the fictive language and form that has become normative for the literature. He has come as close to defining what many would consider ‘the archetypal African novel’,

⁵⁵³ Read the debate between Caryl Phillips and Chinua Achebe, “Was Joseph Conrad Really a Racist?” In *Philosophia Africana*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (March 2007), pp. 59 – 66.

⁵⁵⁴ See Dan Izevbaye, “Chinua Achebe and the African novel” in *The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel*, by F. Abiola Irele (ed.): Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 31.

partly by demonstrating that it is possible to shape literary English into the language of an ethnic experience far removed from the English homeland.⁵⁵⁵

Second, Achebe has had a strong and enduring influence on the production, publishing and reception of African literature in English, especially on the teaching of the literature. Quite a few indigenous imprints were inspired by the success of the *African Writers Series*. Achebe has also inspired a generation of African writers, not so much in the popularity of the theme of culture conflict but in his handling of the material.⁵⁵⁶ I hope Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's texts will do the same with the younger generation of readers.

Although A. C. Jordan's *The Wrath of the Ancestors* or António de Assis Júnior's *O Segredo da Morta* (The Secret of the Deceased) had anticipated the theme of *Things Fall Apart* by nearly two decades, it is mainly Achebe's attitude and stylistic innovation that made the difference. Achebe's strong influence on the increase in the production of a specific genre, the novel of Igbo traditional life and the adaptation of English for African experience, has led Charles Nnolim to describe the producers of this genre as the "sons of Achebe".⁵⁵⁷

Third, and perhaps Achebe's most important influence given his goal as a writer, is his contribution to the advancement of a new postcolonial consciousness, particularly as his fiction dates from the eve of African independence, thus giving emphatic voice to the pan-African impulse that found political expression in African independence. It is in the novel form like *Things Fall Apart* that Achebe has made his most enduring contribution as a postcolonial writer.⁵⁵⁸

As for *Vou lá visitar Pastores*, Duarte's option is mostly to travel with his informants, to visit them. He builds here "the most inventive metaphor of postcolonial mobility: the search for a locus of observation that is not invasive, and that relates dynamically to the circles of documentation and

⁵⁵⁵ "This achievement is underscored by his stylistic antecedent: he made acceptable what began as a utopian dream for the African writer and an anathema for English scholars. Literary English began as a conservative medium- receptive for foreign lexical items but protective of its imperial prescription of the metropolitan standard for syntax and idiom. Early attempts to break through this bulwark were repelled as barbarisms, as when some early non-standard literary English usage from the British Commonwealth was described as "doing violence to the English language", surely a modernist subconscious evocation of a sixteen-century ideal of English that is 'written clean and pure, unmixed and unmingled with borrowing of their tongues'. See Dan Izevbaye, "Chinua Achebe and the African novel" in *The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel*, by F. Abiola Irele (ed.): Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 31 – 48.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 31 – 48.

⁵⁵⁷ See Dan Izevbaye, "Chinua Achebe and the African novel" in *The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel*, by F. Abiola Irele (ed.): Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 31 – 48.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 31 – 48.

reception. He asks of those who read him the same that he applies to himself: discretion and connectivity.”⁵⁵⁹ So, in reading *Vou lá visitar Pastores*, a reader has to connect with others, has to go from individual contacts to forms of applying wisdom to the common good, to “self-fashioned” as J. Clifford would put it.

In fact, Ruy Duarte de Carvalho proposes “an exercise of continuity and multiple revisitations,”⁵⁶⁰ says Ana Maria Martinho. This means that “whereas discursive continuity is a very common approach in colonial ethnographic representation, the postcolonial counterpart often prefers discontinuity.”⁵⁶¹ Consequently, the problem will be to represent “the observed through an unbiased lens”.⁵⁶² For Ana Martinho, “the issue of readership is also implied here; reinterpreting contested histories is in the centre of this work as it is in the centre of Clifford’s”⁵⁶³, for example.

Thus, this allusion would raise questions like “if African cultures have been for so long exposed to the European presence, through language, ritual and socio-cultural practices; if territories have been dramatically changed and have now new borders; if meanings have also been transformed: where do we find some form of continuity? What tools facilitate the understanding of what is happening today and what is changing in front of our eyes?”⁵⁶⁴ Ana Martinho answers these questions by paraphrasing P. Benson,⁵⁶⁵ who argues that

There is no such thing as objective reports and that the personal and the literary are embedded in all sorts of accounts...The observer is as impacted by the worlds he/she reports on as the observed is. Many of these interpretations are not under control of the scientist and that weakens his/her position as an outsider. It may convey in fact equivocal assertions and idealizations.⁵⁶⁶

What does it mean? It certainly means that “regardless of what happens in the course of the multiple contacts, all involved are exposed to those interactions and they all participate in the writing

⁵⁵⁹ Ana Maria Martinho, *opus cit.*, p. 86.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 88.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 89.

⁵⁶² *Ibid*, p. 89.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 89.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 89.

⁵⁶⁵ P. Benson (ed.), *Anthropology and Literature*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993, in *The Protean Web – Literature and Ethnography*... p. 89.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 90.

and reading and 'interpretation' (my emphasis) of texts produced under such conditions''⁵⁶⁷ like *Vou lá visitar Pastores* and *Things fall Apart*.

Thus, *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* can be read in African Literature and included in their National canons as ethnographic and literary instruments in the reading and trying to understand past and current African realities such as political, social, and cultural. It appears to me that a new theorization for the understanding of postcolonial African cultures resulting from years of harsh colonialization, whether for more sedentary communities or for more nomadic ones is needed. All in all, these two texts can develop inter-ethnic understanding through fiction and, concomitantly, they show us how the language of social science fuses with that of the literary imagination.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 90.

Chapter VII: General Conclusion

Throughout the previous chapters, a comparative study of the authors Chinua Achebe and Ruy Duarte de Carvalho as well as of their respective texts, *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, was conducted, in which differences and similarities in terms of ideological, aesthetical and cultural aspects were investigated and discussed.

The research question and its main sub questions raised at the outset of this investigation, regarding *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, have been addressed, namely: (1) whether there were convergent and divergent aspects in aesthetic and ideological terms in these texts; (2) whether these texts were important in the Nigeria and Angolan canons; (3) whether there were theoretical frameworks that justified a critical study of these two texts; (4) whether the Igbo and Kuvale people had representations which inspired the construction of reality in both texts; (5) whether their myths helped build linguistic and cultural identities; (6) whether colonization was able to hinder these representations; (7) whether the encodings such as Cow and Yam were central to being Kuvale or Igbo; (8) and whether their self-representations could be epistemologically compared and universalized and thus inspire contemporary social models. The answer to all these questions was positive.

This study found that there were common and distinctive features in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Carvalho's *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*. This hypothesis was confirmed by firstly reviewing key concepts such as literature, ethnography, literary theory, literary criticism, fiction, social construction and representation.

It was found that literature is caused by social circumstances and happens everywhere at any time. It is a body of written or oral traditions by a people or by peoples using the same or different languages. But it does not mean that everything that is written or orally expressed is necessarily literature. Although critics would differ on the form, purpose or ends of literature, one thing is for sure: the true ends of literature are to instruct and delight. In this sense, the ideological purpose of literature is to instruct and the aesthetical one is certainly to delight and animate people. Literature is, therefore, a form of human expression.

Most critics have appealed to literary theory and literary criticism in order to decide whether a piece of work is or is not literary. This decision is usually concerned with interpretation of texts or of some particular kind of literature, with issues of evaluation or with issues of appreciation. Thus,

literary criticism is normally skeptical about the foundation of the subject it is investigating. This type of reading makes literature a territory of unimaginable twists and nuances to be faced by whoever engages in the serious business of literary criticism. Of course, when searching for meaning and understanding of texts such as those of Achebe and Carvalho which are under scrutiny in this study, the underlying structures of the texts as well as the role of the reader should not be ignored.

Aligned with literary criticism is the ethnographic method. Ethnography is traditionally defined as a scientific description of the culture and of the society by someone who lives in it. This view is crucial while searching for meaning and understanding of a written text or an orally based literary tradition. But, the new perspective of ethnography is more enriching. Ethnographic studies are no longer restricted to small primitive societies, but may also focus on such social units as urban ghettos or even on critical works as they impact the social *milieu* in or about which they were written. *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* are examples of this new perspective.

Most of these critical works end up being labelled as “ethnographic fictions,” i.e., texts written with the purpose of conveying a message based on imaginary or real characters and events in order to tell a story which can instruct, delight or challenge readers and listeners. These fictions are usually a result of anthropological pieces of research carried out by ethnographers, anthropologists or literary critics while studying, describing and evaluating a society or a particular people of interest.

Moreover, many of these “ethnographic fictions” are born as a consequence of participant observation in certain social *milieux*. Achebe’s and Carvalho’s texts are within this methodological pattern. As many literary scholars, like Andrew Lang, Jane Harrison, Sabatino Moscati or Johaness Bronsted, were able to do, Achebe and Carvalho also appear to have searched literary sources for ethnographic data to compose their texts, in which the language of social science fuses with that of the literary imagination, and used the method of participant observation to compose their texts.

This remark is a justification that ethnography and literature have usually been two important tools for studying African literatures and cultures by insiders and outsiders. “Most of the modern African narratives are not merely reproductions of the so-called traditional oral stories and histories. They are cultural testimonies of national travellers, and epitomize transitions, experiences as well as symbolic, cartographic, and cultural routes” says Ana Martinho, with whom I agree much.

In that sense, African literatures tell us about their cultures, social structures and even politics. As Larry Diamond says, quoted in chapter one of this thesis, “the fiction of a certain country, culture

or period may reveal more of its value, customs, conflicts, stresses, changes and transformations than does all the formal scholarship of historians and social scientists.” But, this does not mean that the work of historians and social scientists is not important in providing a precious, necessary and factual window into a society, a people and an era. Achebe’s and Carvalho’s works reveal much of values, customs, conflicts, stresses, changes and transformations of the cultures they wrote about.

In that context, the social construction and representation theories also provided an important window into understanding how the people they wrote about created meaning through social interaction with others, through language and symbols. I found that Igbo and Kuvale people and their culture are symbolically constructed and represented, as shown in chapter five.

Secondly, the above hypothesis, suggesting that there were common and distinctive features in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Carvalho’s *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, was also confirmed by investigating the biography of both authors, their relevant works, their position in the respective canons, the historical and literary contexts, the plots and themes of their texts as shown in chapters three and four. The themes which were found range from life to culture, i.e., dance, poetry, proverbs, colonization, wars, children, education, ancestors, the role of women, hunting, fishing, marketplaces, Christianity, traditional religion, tradition and modernity, suicide, agriculture, farming, music, wealth and poverty, wrestling, food and drinks, land and law, political governance and ethics, myths and folklore, housing and family, social distribution and justice, science and philosophies, death and immortality, ecological and economic balance, and the clash of civilizations.

Thirdly, I have considered the Igbo and Kuvale (Mucubal) cultures comparatively, i.e., through the comparison of their representations, myths, linguistic and cultural identities, and by reviewing post-colonial imperialist powers, discourse and cultural hegemony as shown in chapter five; and finally in chapter six, I analysed *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, i.e., by highlighting the ideological and aesthetical aspects, the ethnographic and literary convergences and divergences, and the readership and theoretical implications of these two narratives in African literature as a whole and in their national canons.

The understanding of key concepts in chapter two, the biographical notes of both authors as well as the social, cultural and academic influences that they may have received, as developed in chapters three and four, allowed me to prepare a theoretical ground with which I engaged in a comparative analysis of both people and the different aspects of both texts in chapters five and six.

Since this study is situated in the context of African literature, reviewing the history of this field was also necessary. This general review offered valuable subsidies in order to understand the problems involved in defining, and categorising most African literatures and ethnographies. Pessimistic interpretations usually characterise African literatures as extensions of European literatures since most of them used European languages to write and speak about African realities.

In opposition to that, my review of the state of the art of African literature as a whole found that although it is true that most of them used European languages to write and speak about African realities, African literatures are older than the presence of colonial languages in the continent and cannot stop having a utilitary function, since they talk about social cohesion; they defend African cultures; they mind their mystical life; they address the issues of order, justice, morality, ethics, land and folklore; they aim at giving explanations on the concepts of universality, time and space in literary form and vision; and they explore a creative use of language, as remarked by Tunure Ojaide in chapter two. There are African literatures written in various indigenous languages, but language alone cannot be the sole definer of literature.

Effectively, this study concludes that the convergent and divergent aspects in aesthetic and ideological terms found in Achebe's and Carvalho's texts can be summarized in the following way:

Convergent aspects in aesthetic and ideological terms:

1. Both texts are "fictional ethnographies". They must be included in their localized canons as well as globalized for developing inter-ethnic understanding through fiction since they defend African cultures, mind their mystical life, address the issues of order, justice, morality, ethics, land and folklore; they attempt to give explanations to the concepts of universality, particulars, time and space in literary form and vision; explore a creative use of language, and talk about social cohesion.

I believe that this particular finding is crucial, especially in a world like ours where social relations are at stake and torn apart by ethnic, political and economic conflicts experienced in various parts of Africa, Middle East, Asia, Europe and America, leading often to military confrontations and terrorism. Thus, both texts can achieve universal significance and relevance.

2. The negative impacts of imperialist discourse, language and culture on most colonized countries, now with new geographical and cultural configurations as a result of the Conference of Berlin in the years 1880s, are still being felt strongly today. Reading some of

these discourses, which were created in order to conquer and dominate the 'other', I noticed that religion has also played a role in disseminating and holding those narratives. I perceive that most of these narratives appear to be still influencing the way Western countries see themselves and see other peoples who have been under their colonial dominance and power. Both authors addressed the negative impacts of imperialist discourse, language and culture on Africa in their texts and they tried to deconstruct these imperialist discourses by understanding and promoting other cultures through fiction and ethnography.

3. Most of the African literatures and ethnographies written by African and by Africanists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were often seen as an ideological reaction against Western discriminatory narratives about land, people and culture, rather than aesthetically and literally relevant texts. Consequently, I also see *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* not only as ideological reactions to the Western fixed ideas of hegemony in relation to literature, ethnography, anthropology, economy, history, science and politics, but also as aesthetically and literally intertwined works. For me, Achebe and Carvalho do succeed in repositioning Africa as a whole in the present literary, economic, cultural and political arenas as a voice to be listened to and not to be ignored, and as a continent to be embraced and challenged as well.
4. These two texts readdress the old issues concerning language, culture, religion, politics, tradition, modernity and identity. They offered valuable subsidies to further enrich and enlighten this debate. They emphasized the idea of reading people's fictions from different positions and perspectives. So, anyone who wishes to know more about other cultures, he/she must read and understand firstly the fictions and narratives these cultures inspired from different positions and perspectives, and above all from within them, before criticizing or darkening them.
5. In reading these texts from within, I was able to find that both Igbo and Kuvale people are culturally rich and represent themselves as special and self-sufficient "nations", yet they acknowledge and respect exogenous and cultural differences and constructions as well.
6. The systems of beliefs and customs of both Kuvale and Igbo people play an important role in defining their social ethos. Therefore, they should be considered in discursive complexity and not just as mere attempts to explain the origin of life and the world but also relevant ways of explanation to most things.

7. Both texts combine anthropology and literature, although they also question the limits of objectivity, impartiality in the collection of data about the cultures and people they write about as well as the limits of scientific methodology in the field-work. However, they do not deny research as such. They make it useful to its function of understanding and clarifying the worlds which are not ours.
8. In an exciting new approach, they brought together in a common space those elements of both disciplines that remained disparate only because they remained separate. They seem to suggest that these two core disciplines are not static, but instead fluid sites of shifting cultural currents and academic interests; that neither literature nor anthropology are unified, self-contained disciplines; that critical discussions in each field do not emanate from a single centre but originate from a variety of sources and intersect at various, sometimes non-contiguous, points.

Divergent aspects in aesthetic and ideological terms:

1. Cows are absolutely central to being a Kuvale and maintaining their social cohesion. They can be seen as a metaphorical image in which they are believed to be vital animals for the natural balance between grassland, water and their socioeconomic needs. Apart from this natural equilibrium, they also sustain and support social and economic relations. That logic of socioeconomic relations of the shepherds is different from the one found among other fixed ethnic groups. And it is this logic of equilibrium and mobility which these fixed ethnic groups have been continually questioning and disapproving of, and have seen as a social disorder that needs to be fought and regulated. Are these fixed societies right in proceeding this way? I think they are not right.
2. Although I was able to confirm that Yam was the king of crops among the Igbo in the past, in the last two centuries, however, many Igbo's customs have evolved so dramatically that it is almost impossible to find original Igbo traditional societies which have not been deeply touched by modernity and globalization. So, today probably Yam is no longer as central as it was before, when the legendary figure of *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo, was reported "alive by Achebe.
3. Kuvale's society, however, appears to be of a more pragmatic and traditional type which, I believe, can inspire contemporary economic models, especially because of the insistence of this nomadic society on finding the balance between nature and culture, between the social

and the physical worlds, between labour, the tools of labour and the natural resources in it. This vision is economically and ecologically relevant since it is environmentally friendly, and certainly challenges the economic theories of free market, unlimited consumption and commodity usage. We need a more balanced free market which takes into account the importance of the relations between culture, nature and people, between production and consumption and between tradition and modernity respecting human rights as well. This small ethnic group teaches us the logic of balance between things and the people we touch or encounter.

4. *Things Fall Apart* was written in a mode of narration, in a prose style where the English language reflects the African verbal style that would be unexpected in British or American speech. It reshaped the English language in order to imitate the linguistic pattern of the Igbo language which is orally rhythmic and repetitive. Achebe's rhythms and repetitions in his text are a technique taken from the traditional oral storyteller, when sitting and talking to a group of listeners, though he is not a *griot*, or oral historian.
5. Achebe's narrative is thematic and structural. The twenty-five chapters of his text are sequential and consequential. One event leads to the other. The text has not only to be understood backwards, but also simultaneously backwards and forward if we are to follow its thematic and structural presentation. So, Achebe creates his own literary style based on rhythm and repetitions where the Igbo words interchange with the English words, creating phonic, metric, grammatical, metaphorical, imagistic, thematic and proverbial complexities.
6. This text has revealed that Achebe changed the syntax and semantics of the English language. Through such reading, I have learnt about the nature of rhythm, orality and semantics and about the form of the novel Achebe created. He shaped a singular variety of English, and based on this, it was possible to find how British English has changed its semantic tone in various African linguistic contexts either as an instrument of literacy or of communication.
7. *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, on the other hand, is more an anthropological text, which investigated and recorded the wisdom hidden or revealed in the oral tradition of the Kuvale, constructed or reconstructed and translated into an outstanding cultural study. Ruy Duarte de Carvalho seems to have adopted two enunciative strategies: one ethnographic and the other fictional. The first strategy appeals to the study and preservation of the wisdom and culture of the nomadic people of the South west desert of Angola which is not well known yet. The second

strategy is his text itself which is aesthetically shaped and reshaped, phrased and rephrased, sometimes interrupted and questioned, and then revived as he wrote it.

8. Carvalho interfered directly in the text as he recalls memories of the places he visits and the experiences he had as a shepherd himself. In doing so, he emphasized the role the journals and informants play for an ethnographic investigation as this one he conducted. Then again he warns the late comers or researchers about the questions they ask, about the necessity of being open to anthropological surprises, challenges and biases carried or awaiting them, about the problems of language barriers, of uncertainties and cultural conflicts and of other prejudicial perspectives.
9. Carvalho's text resembles the European travel literature of the XVI through XIX centuries. It is written in a style where the days and progression of the investigation are recorded in tapes and journals as he moved from one place to the other. Carvalho kept the dates, the names of the people he met, the maps he drew, the conversations he had, the ceremonies he attended, the questions he raised, the pictures he painted and the bibliographies he checked.
10. Syntactically, *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* was written in the first, second and third persons, using nominative pronouns such as I, he, she, you, we and they, which makes his text very moving and intimate. That is why I say that his text is fundamentally marked by the theory of self-awareness which is part of the methodology used by ethnography and contemporary literature. This way, he reinterprets the traditional way of doing anthropology and literature by moving away from its former theoretical authorities like Malinowski, Evans Pritchard, Luiz Gonzaga de Mello, Franz Boas and others.
11. Carvalho's methodology is closer to what D. R. Angelis has done: literature becomes both a creation and a creator of culture with the anthropologist as the observer/reader/interpreter. The dual role of literature and the repositioning of anthropology allow for a multiplicity of possibilities in reading, writing about, interpreting people, places and perspectives, real or imagined. Consequently, Carvalho seems to have crossed the traditional boundaries of the canon, and seems to see fiction, poetry, drama and culture as intertwined entities in which the author and the reader are crucial in understanding the realities they interpret.

Effectively, I conclude that Carvalho converges and diverges ethnographically and literally with Achebe. Both authors cover an array of literary and anthropological concerns from the more

common ethnographic and literary studies to the liminal discussions of rituals of the Mucubals and Igbo.

7. 1. Recommendations and prospective research

Obviously, this study is incomplete since social and human realities are dynamic and not static. As I write, tradition and modernity, for example, are overlapping and challenging each other, the language of social science is fusing with that of the literary imagination, and provoking inevitable changes within and outside their imaginary boundaries.

Despite the limitations of social, literary and cultural researches, I think that by raising and answering my research questions from the outset, my study contributed theoretically to the present state of the art of modern African literature, culture and language, as many have already done. However, this research could have also explored, for example, the reception of *Things Fall Apart* and *Vou lá Visitar Pastores* in the European literary contexts; it could also have studied the issue of access, evaluation and readership of these two books among the youth in Africa; it could also have explored the political implications of these two narratives, especially *Vou lá Visitar Pastores*, in the judicial and political systems of Nigeria and Angola.

Issues such as land ownership, cultural and physical mobility, known as “transumância”, the migration crises, the conflict between tradition and modernity (globalization) in the rural and urban areas will continue to be relevant and challenging in Africa for many more years to come. Accordingly, should not these issues be objects of investigation and research within literary studies and other fields of cultural and linguistic studies too?

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IX: Glossary

Ajami – diverse literatures which used the Arabic alphabet for the non-Arabic languages.

Amharic – Ethiopian language which imposed itself against Ghe'ez, becoming today the main language of literary works in Ethiopia, with a big quantity of fascinating written works, not only poetry but also other genres imported from Europe.

Batiha – linguistic aphorism meaning 'I spoke' said by a Kuvale person of *Kavelokamo* or of *Dyombe*.

Buluvulus – young boys, between the age of 12 and 30 years old, to whom are given a great number of cattle belonging to several families which move far and about to look for grassland and water. It also means a small fly.

Cobaes – category of Kuvale ethnic group

Dibundu – word in Kimbundu language meaning black person.

Dyemba-imu or *vererimu* – words meaning something like womb or 'single breast', which correspond to the word lineage.

Dyuvu – houses

Dyombe - a category of Kuvale ethnic group.

Eanda – it is a clan or group of people who share the same blood or have the same bloodties.

Eanda – word meaning clan

Egwugwu – Igbo word meaning spirits

Ehako – cows inherited in the same *eanda*.

Ela – fire, altar or a place of worship.

Ghe'ez – Ethiopian language, which during various centuries became the only agent of religious thought, of culture and literary writing. In fact, this sacred language is still being used today by some conservative writers, as the sole means of composition of hymns, theological treatises and other religious works.

Gikuyo – Language spoken in Kenya by the Gikuyo ethnic group.

Itiha – Linguistic aphorism meaning 'I spoke.'

Kakomba – Kuvale word which means to uproot everything and leave nothing.

Kavelokamo – a category of Kuvale ethnic group.

Ketambo – a place at the back of the houses separated by a fence of pines where women and guests stay.

Kimbares or *Tyimbare* – ethnic group found in Namibe. This category was a name applied to all those who adopted the Western lifestyle in terms of material, social or economic lifestyle.

Kinda or *tyimbundu* – huge barns

Kupindula pithitha: to greet the one who mourns for someone who died.

Kwisi – ethnic group found in Namibe

Mmo – Igbo word meaning male secret society

Mucubal – another name for Kuvale people.

Mukuarimi – word in Kimbundu language meaning speaker, gossip, talkative.

Munano – word used to label negatively someone who is originally from the Umbundu ethnic group.

Mundyombe – someone from the category Dyombe.

Mwepe, muthu mupengue – Kuvale word meaning widow

Mwila – a person from the Nhaneka ethnic group.

Mwingona – sons

Mytyiheia – a category of Kuvale ethnic group.

Nga Muturi – word in Kimbundu language meaning Madam Widow.

Oluvale - polygamy.

Ongandas – spaces for domestic groups of consumption.

Otchimbundo – someone who is originally from the Umbundu ethnic group.

Sambos – lands.

Swahili – Non-Arabic language and culture which resulted from the fusion of native societies in Sub-Saharan Africa with the immigrants originally from Arabic countries.

Tyiheia – category of Kuvale ethnic group.

Vilandava – to avoid problems.

X: Annexes

10. 1. The Photos of the Authors and the works studied



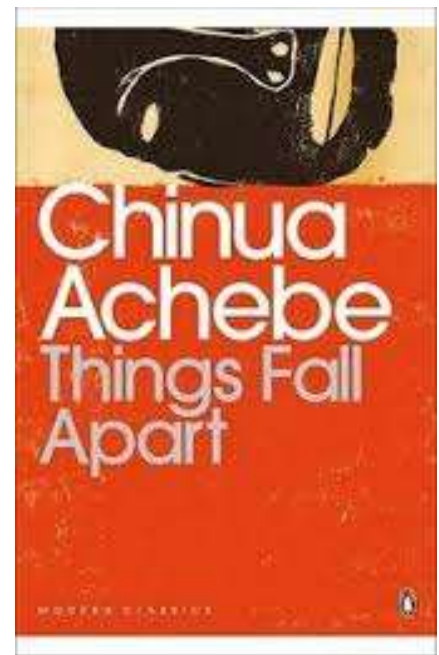
PICTURE 1: CHINUA ACHEBE



PICTURE 2: RUY DUARTE DE CARVALHO

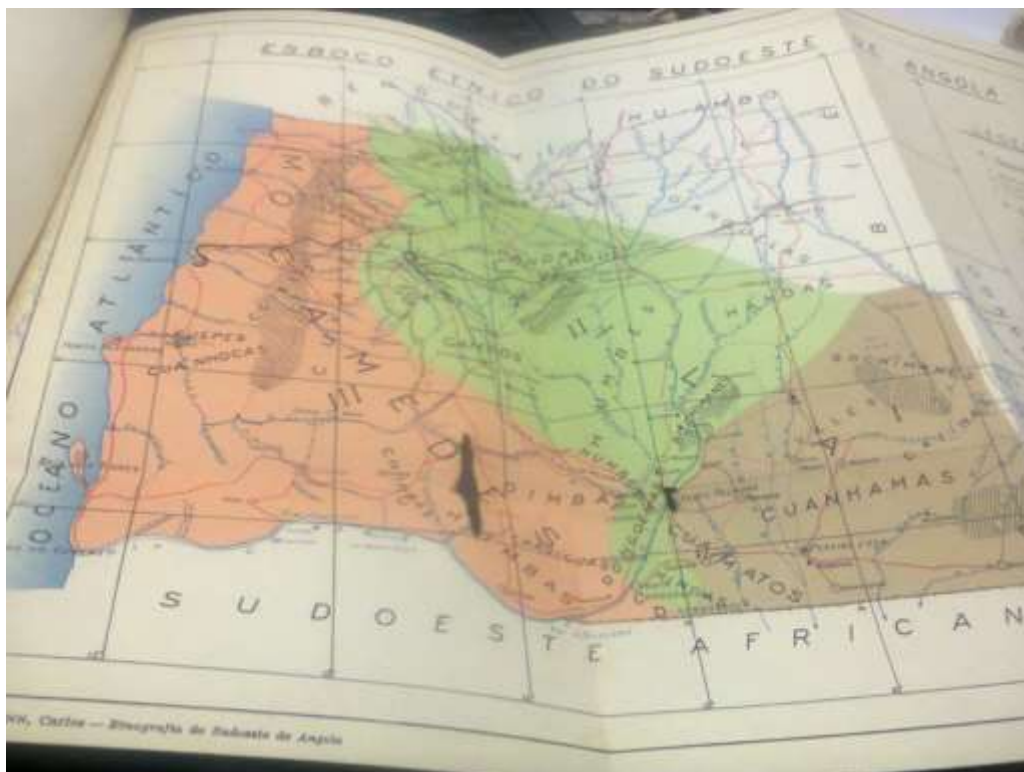


PICTURE 3: Carvalho's work



PICTURE 4: Achebe's work

10. 2. The Map of Kuvale Land and a photo of Kuvale people.

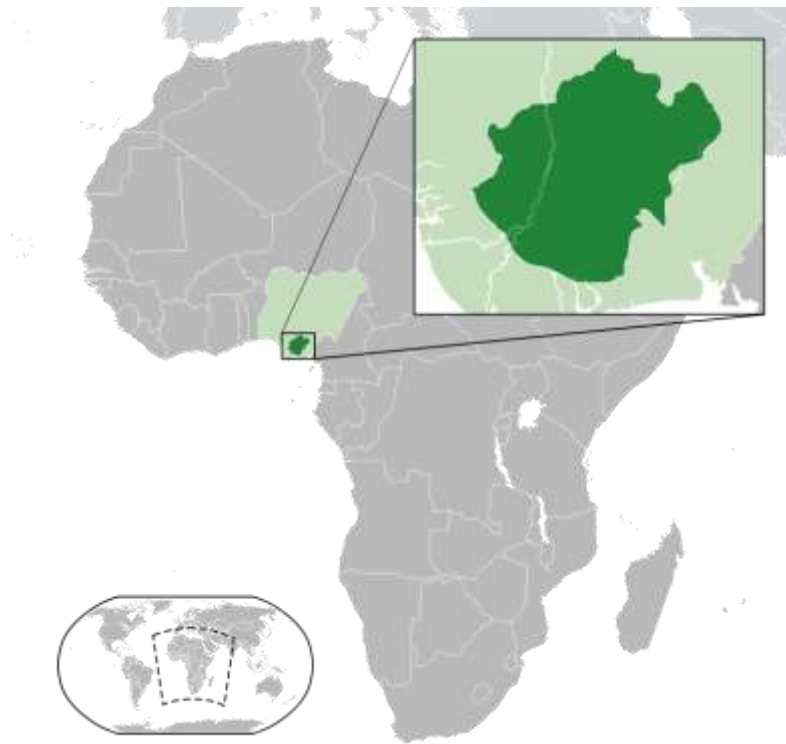


PICTURE 5: ETHNIC SKETCH OF THE SOUTH-WEST OF ANGOLA. IN THE PINK AREA ARE FOUND THE HERERO GROUP: THE DIMBAS, CHIMBAS, CHAVICUAS, CUANHOCAS, KUALES AND GUENDALENGAS. (THIS MAP WAS TAKEN FROM CARLOS ENTERMANN'S ETHNOGRAPHIA DO SUDOESTE DE ANGOLA, VOL. I)



PICTURE 6: KUVALE SHEPHERDS

10. 3. The Map of Igboland, photos of its people and some customs.



PICTURE 6: THE GREEN AREA IS THE IGBOLAND



PICTURE 7: IGBO-UKWU WAS THE SITE OF AN EARLY INDIGENOUS BRONZE INDUSTRY THAT WAS REDISCOVERED IN THE 20TH CENTURY. MANY OF THE ITEMS RECOVERED WERE RITUAL OBJECTS LIKE THIS 9TH CENTURY BRONZE VESSEL.



PICTURE 8: YAM



PICTURE 9: THE FIRST DAY OF YAM CUSTOM



PICTURE 10: THE WRESTLERS IN COMBAT.



PICTURE 11: THE NEW YAM FESTIVAL



Picture 12: the Igbo Drums